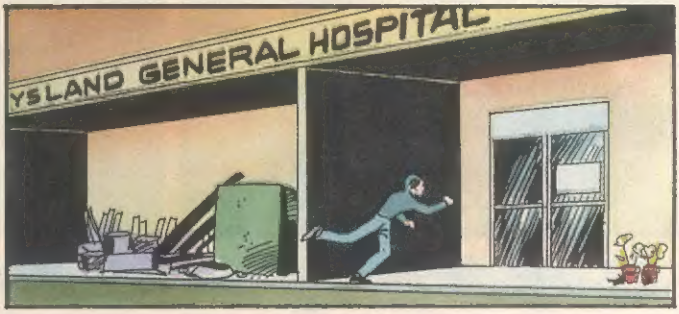
COMICO

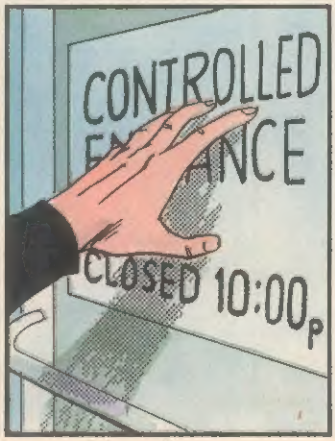
JONNY QUEST™

VOLUME TWO
Issues
#16
through
#31

PLAGUE

KEYSLAND GENERAL HOSPITAL


YSLAND GENERAL HOSPITAL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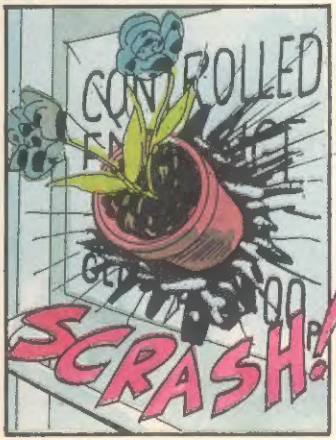
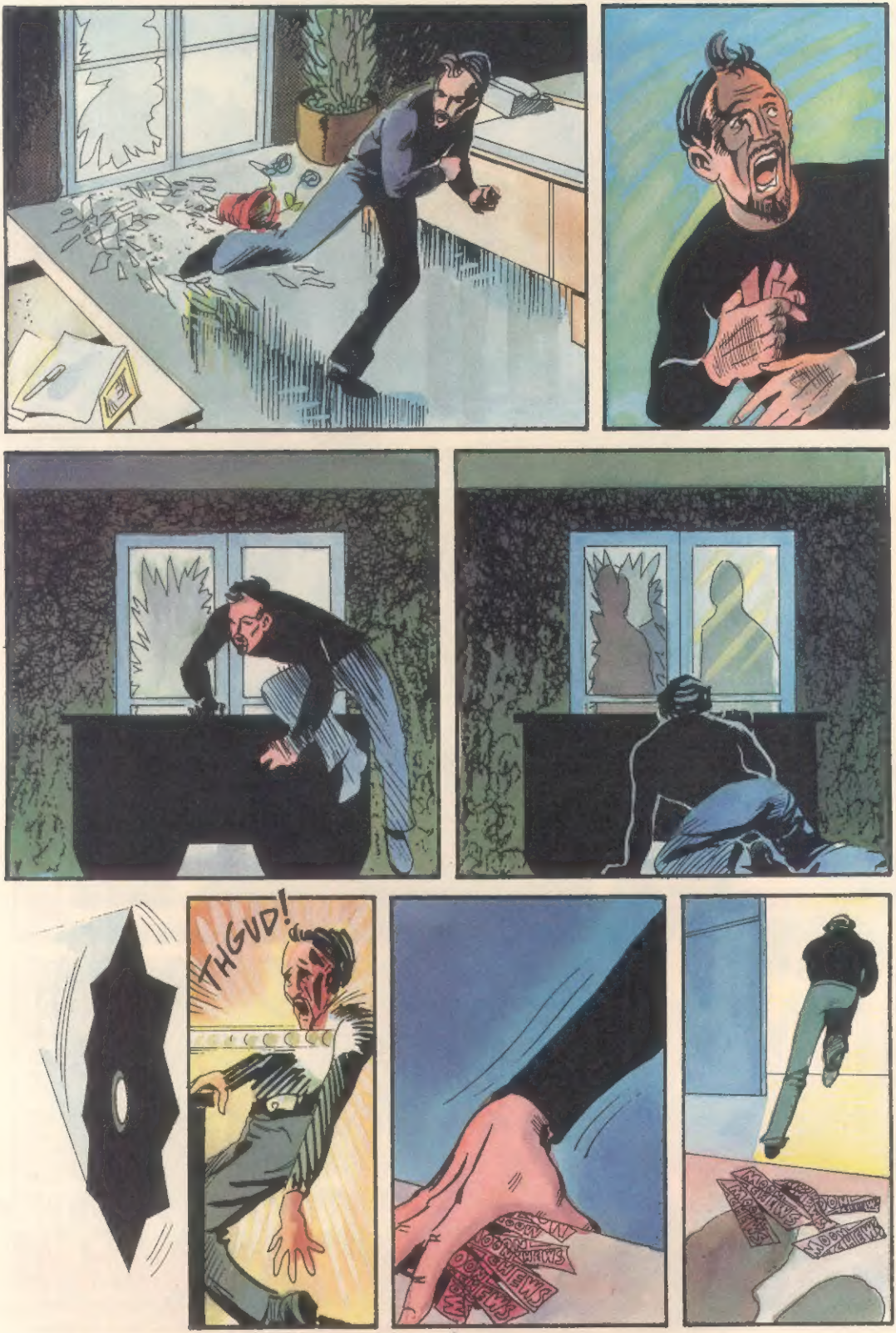
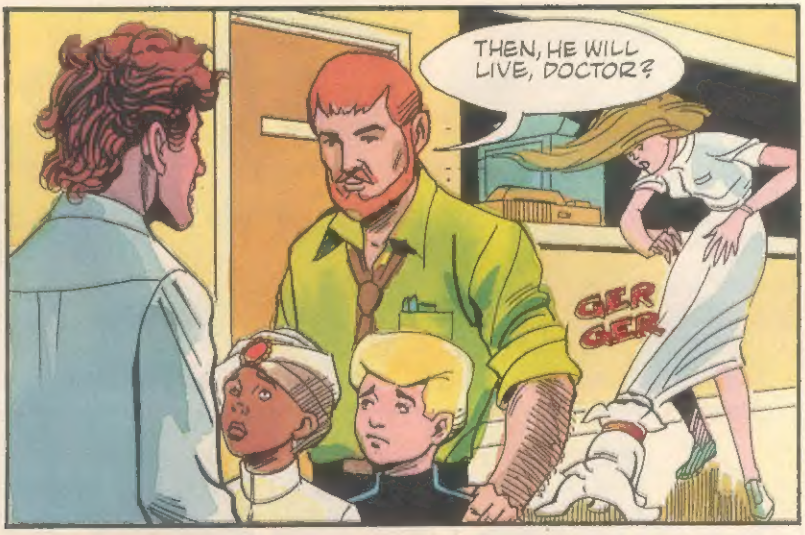
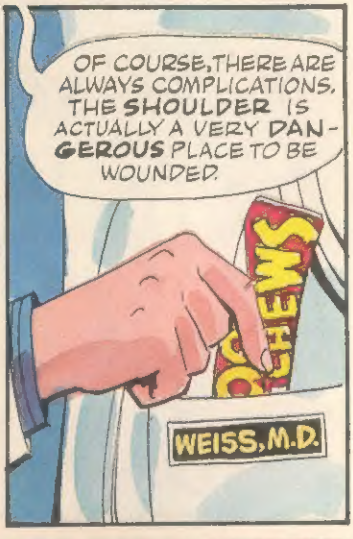

SCRASH!

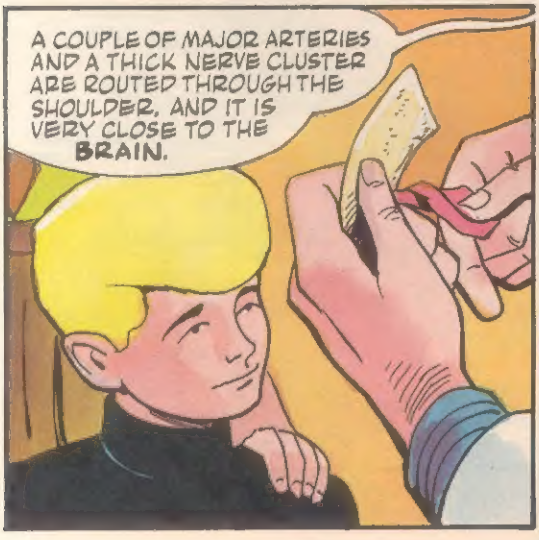

THGUD!

STORY: WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS • ART + COLOR: MARK WHEATLEY • LETTERS: MARC HEMPEL
LETTERS + COLOR: KATHRYN MAYER • EDITS: DIANA SCHUTZ

SOMEWHERE, BACK THERE, IN SOME CUBICLE, RACE BANNON IS FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE. AND, ALTHOUGH I AM A DOCTOR AND HIS FRIEND, THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO TO HELP HIM. NOTHING.







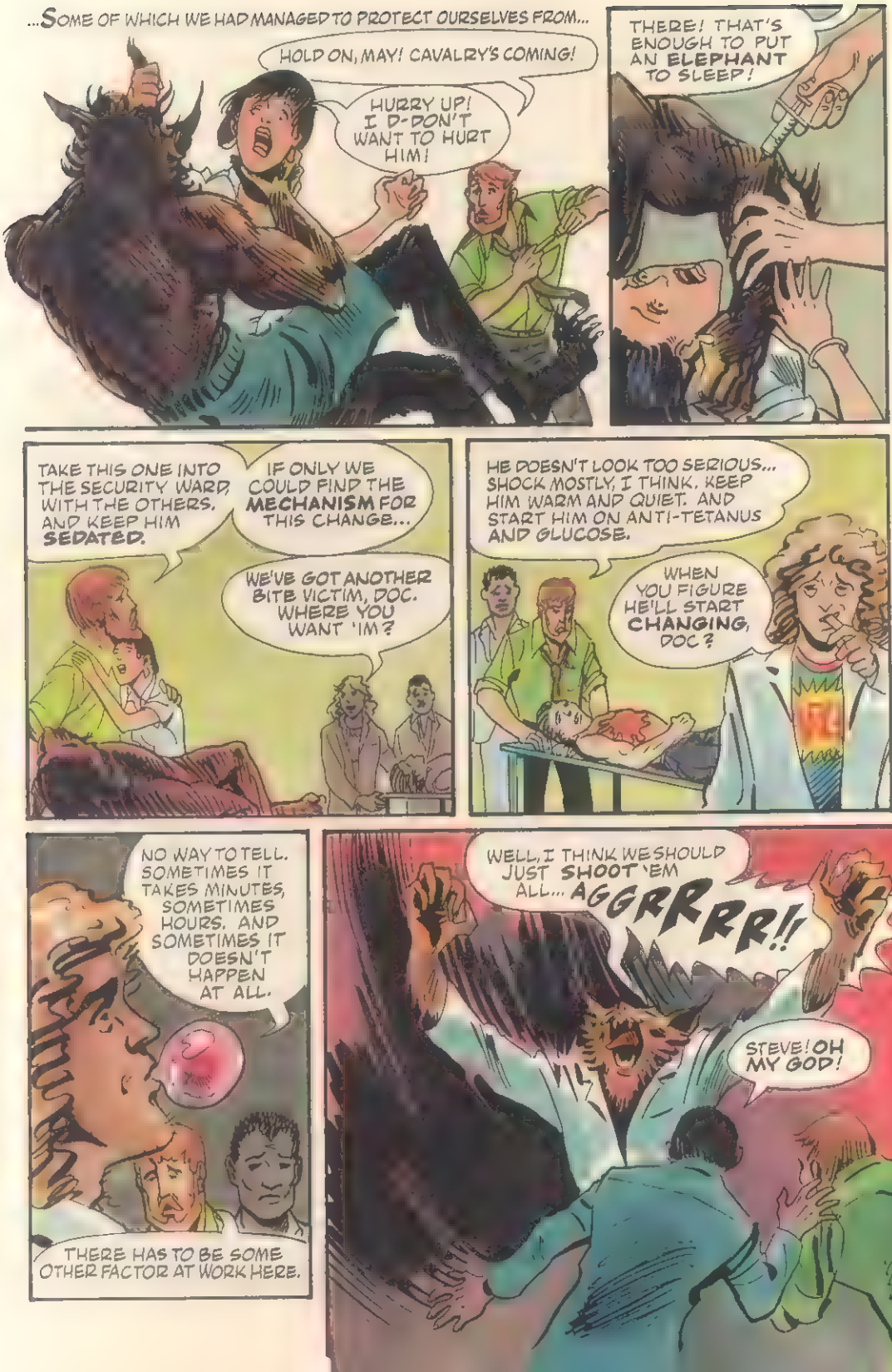
OF COURSE, HE'LL NEED COMPLETE REST AND...
BANDIT! BANDIT, STOP THAT!
OOPS! NO POOCHES IN HERE, GUY. SORRY, BUT THEM'S THE RULES.
YES, SIR, I KNOW, HE'S RACE'S FRIEND, TOO... BUT I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
C'MON, BOY! LET'S GO OUT.
I DON'T WANT TO BE MEAN, BUT WE JUST CAN'T HAVE ANIMALS IN THE HOSPITAL, IT'S...
GAAAARRRRG!
DOCTOR! WHAT'S WRONG?
DUNCAN? IS THERE...?
GGGRRROWRR!
EEEEK!

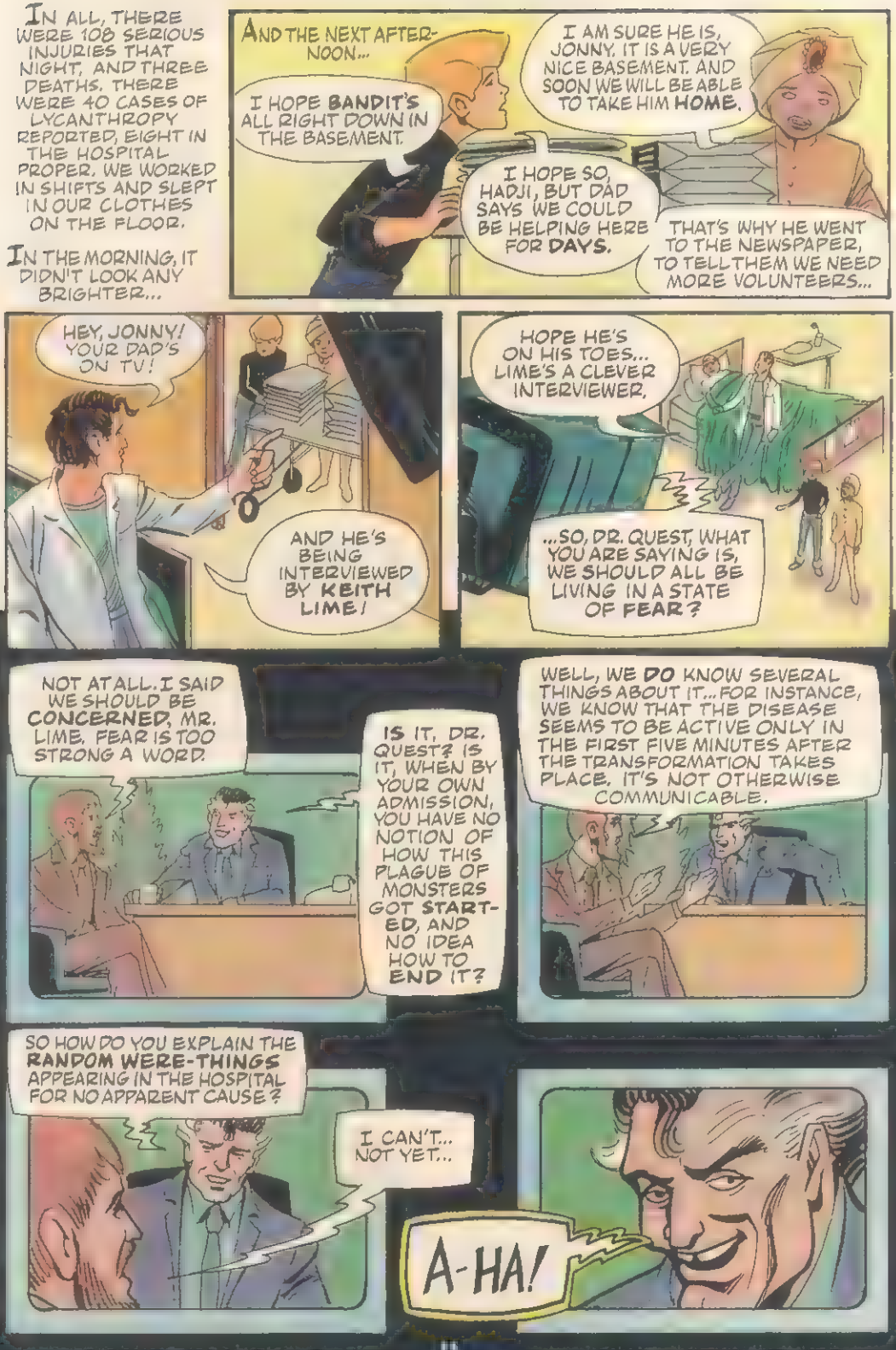
DOCTOR WEISS! WAIT!
SNNARRLLRR!
YIP!
ARF!
JONNY! NO!
GRAASS
SNNRRR!!
WHACK!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, DOC! DON'T MAKE ME SHOOT YOU!
GRRRR?
YAAAAAA! HELP ME! HELP... YAAAAAA!
BLAM
GRRROOWRRR!
HE'S GETTING AWAY! SOMEONE BLOCK THE EXITS!
BLOCK THEM WITH WHAT? HE JUST TOOK A .38 SLUG WITHOUT FLINCHING!

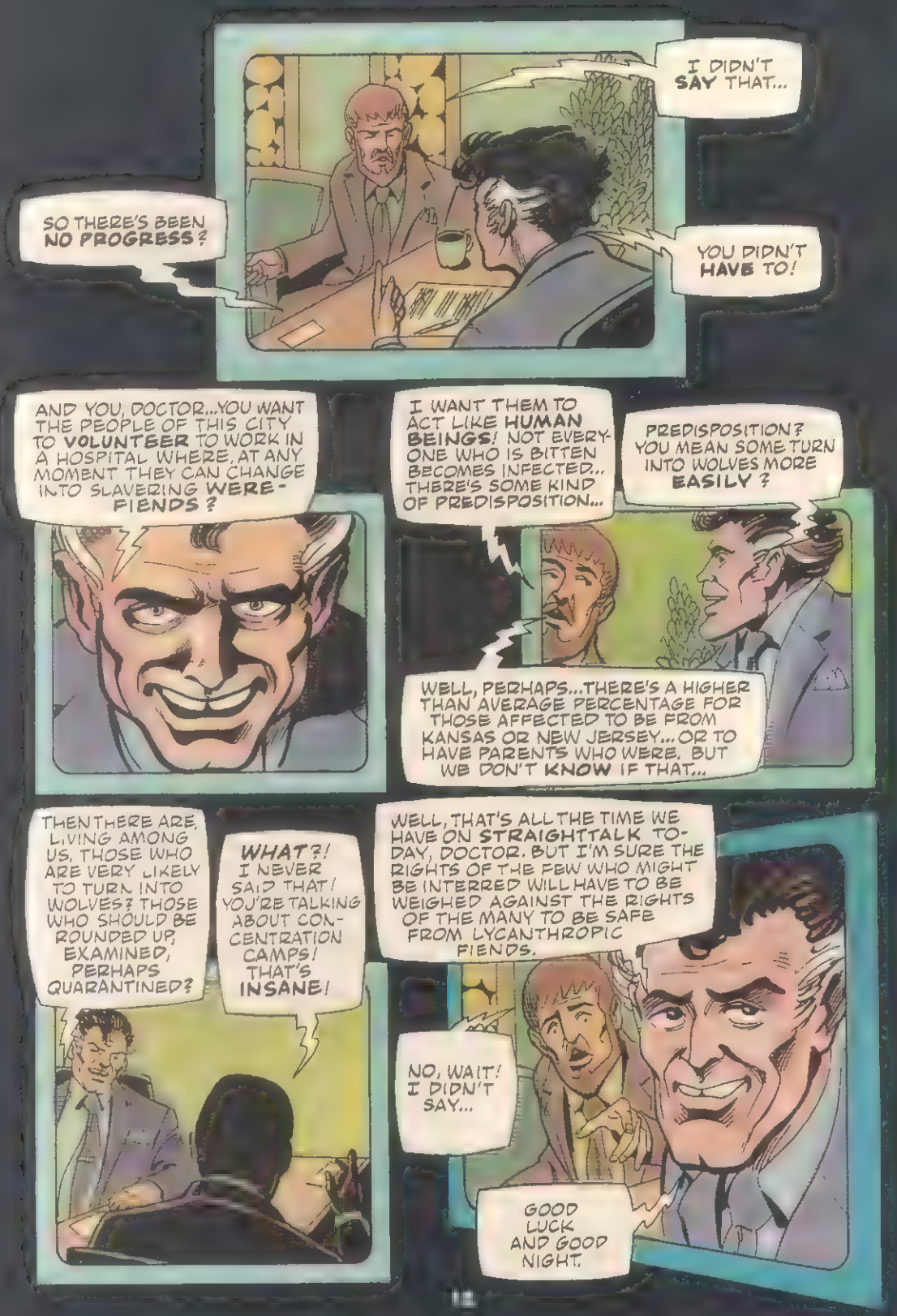
AND SO THE HORROR BEGAN. THE NURSE'S WOUNDS WERE SUPERFICIAL AND THE GUARD DIDN'T APPEAR TO BE IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER...BUT THE CITY WAS...
HE GOT AWAY! SLASHED HIS WAY THROUGH A COUPLE OF ORDERLIES AND PULLED A SECURITY DOOR OFF ITS HINGES!
WE'VE GOT TO WARN THE PROPER AUTHORITIES! CALL THE POLICE FORCE AND THE MAYOR'S OFFICE...HE MUST BE APPREHENDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
IS SAM GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT? HE TOOK A REAL BEATING.
I THINK HE'S WAKING UP.
I...I... uhhhhrr... I FEEL AWFUL...
TAKE IT EASY, FELLOW...YOU'VE HAD A ROUGH COUPLE OF MINUTES.
HE LOOKS VERY... STRANGE... ALMOST AS IF...
GGRRRRRRRR
OH, MY GOD! HE'S TURNING INTO ONE NOW!
PROTECT THE INJURED WOMAN! DON'T LET HIM...
KEEP AWAY FROM HIM!

GGGRRRR!
...HURT HER!
SHE IS CHANGING ALSO!
JONNY! HADJI! THIS WAY!
GET OUT OF THEIR WAY!
GGRRAARRR!
D-DON'T COME ANY CLOSER, DAMN YOU...
I'LL SHOOT!
BLAM!
HE'S...HE'S CHANGING BACK.
HE LOOKS HUMAN AGAIN.
I THINK HE IS DEAD, JONNY.
I...I KILLED HIM. HE WAS MY BEST FRIEND... AND I KILLED HIM..

BUT THE YOUNG WOMAN, THE NURSE, GOT AWAY... AND SPREAD TERRIBLE HAVOC THROUGH THE HOSPITAL BEFORE SHE GOT OUT.
THREE OF HER VICTIMS ALSO BECAME WEREWOLVES.
THERE WAS, OF COURSE, NO QUESTION ABOUT MY STAYING TO HELP...
ONE OF THE WOLF CREATURES RAMPAGED THROUGH THE NEARBY PROJECTS.
ANOTHER SOUGHT OUT THE NEAREST SOURCE OF SLAUGHTERED BEEF..
...IN THE ENSUING RIOT, THREE PEOPLE WERE CRUSHED TO DEATH.
SUPER FOODS
THE NURSE HERSELF MANAGED TO LEAP ON-BOARD A CROSS-TOWN BUS... THIRTY PEOPLE WERE INJURED IN THE CRASH.
THE WEREWOLF GOT AWAY.
THE EMERGENCY ROOM WAS LIKE A WAR ZONE... BUT WITH ITS OWN UNIQUE HAZARDS...
HELP! HELP! HE'S CHANGING... HELP!


...SOME OF WHICH WE HAD MANAGED TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM...
HOLD ON, MAY! CAVALRY'S COMING!
HURRY UP! I D-DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM!
THERE! THAT'S ENOUGH TO PUT AN ELEPHANT TO SLEEP!
TAKE THIS ONE INTO THE SECURITY WARD WITH THE OTHERS. AND KEEP HIM SEDATED.
IF ONLY WE COULD FIND THE MECHANISM FOR THIS CHANGE...
WE'VE GOT ANOTHER BITE VICTIM, DOC. WHERE YOU WANT 'IM?
HE DOESN'T LOOK TOO SERIOUS... SHOCK MOSTLY, I THINK. KEEP HIM WARM AND QUIET. AND START HIM ON ANTI-TETANUS AND GLUCOSE.
WHEN YOU FIGURE HE'LL START CHANGING, DOC?
NO WAY TO TELL. SOMETIMES IT TAKES MINUTES, SOMETIMES HOURS. AND SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T HAPPEN AT ALL.
THERE HAS TO BE SOME OTHER FACTOR AT WORK HERE.
WELL, I THINK WE SHOULD JUST SHOOT 'EM ALL... AGGRRRR!!
STEVE! OH MY GOD!


IN ALL, THERE WERE 108 SERIOUS INJURIES THAT NIGHT, AND THREE DEATHS. THERE WERE 40 CASES OF LYCANTHROPY REPORTED, EIGHT IN THE HOSPITAL PROPER. WE WORKED IN SHIFTS AND SLEPT IN OUR CLOTHES ON THE FLOOR.
IN THE MORNING, IT DIDN'T LOOK ANY BRIGHTER...
AND THE NEXT AFTER-NOON...
I HOPE BANDIT'S ALL RIGHT DOWN IN THE BASEMENT.
I AM SURE HE IS, JONNY. IT IS A VERY NICE BASEMENT. AND SOON WE WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE HIM HOME.
I HOPE SO, HADJI, BUT DAD SAYS WE COULD BE HELPING HERE FOR DAYS.
THAT'S WHY HE WENT TO THE NEWSPAPER, TO TELL THEM WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS...
HEY, JONNY! YOUR DAD'S ON TV!
AND HE'S BEING INTERVIEWED BY KEITH LIME!
HOPE HE'S ON HIS TOES... LIME'S A CLEVER INTERVIEWER.
...SO, DR. QUEST, WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS, WE SHOULD ALL BE LIVING IN A STATE OF FEAR?
NOT AT ALL. I SAID WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED, MR. LIME. FEAR IS TOO STRONG A WORD.
IS IT, DR. QUEST? IS IT, WHEN BY YOUR OWN ADMISSION, YOU HAVE NO NOTION OF HOW THIS PLAGUE OF MONSTERS GOT START-ED, AND NO IDEA HOW TO END IT?
WELL, WE DO KNOW SEVERAL THINGS ABOUT IT... FOR INSTANCE, WE KNOW THAT THE DISEASE SEEMS TO BE ACTIVE ONLY IN THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES AFTER THE TRANSFORMATION TAKES PLACE. IT'S NOT OTHERWISE COMMUNICABLE.
SO HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE RANDOM WERE-THINGS APPEARING IN THE HOSPITAL FOR NO APPARENT CAUSE?
I CAN'T... NOT YET...
A-HA!

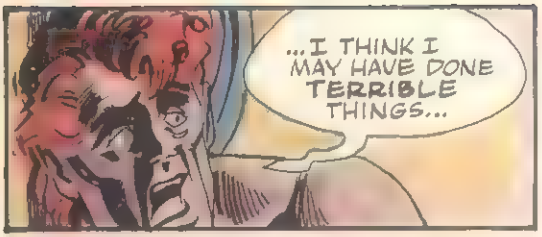

SO THERE'S BEEN NO PROGRESS?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT...
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO!
AND YOU, DOCTOR...YOU WANT THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY TO VOLUNTEER TO WORK IN A HOSPITAL WHERE, AT ANY MOMENT THEY CAN CHANGE INTO SLAVERING WERE-FIENDS?
I WANT THEM TO ACT LIKE HUMAN BEINGS! NOT EVERY-ONE WHO IS BITTEN BECOMES INFECTED... THERE'S SOME KIND OF PREDISPOSITION...
PREDISPOSITION? YOU MEAN SOME TURN INTO WOLVES MORE EASILY?
WELL, PERHAPS...THERE'S A HIGHER THAN AVERAGE PERCENTAGE FOR THOSE AFFECTED TO BE FROM KANSAS OR NEW JERSEY...OR TO HAVE PARENTS WHO WERE. BUT WE DON'T KNOW IF THAT...
THEN THERE ARE, LIVING AMONG US, THOSE WHO ARE VERY LIKELY TO TURN INTO WOLVES? THOSE WHO SHOULD BE ROUNDED UP, EXAMINED, PERHAPS QUARANTINED?
WHAT?! I NEVER SAID THAT! YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT CON-CENTRATION CAMPS! THAT'S INSANE!
WELL, THAT'S ALL THE TIME WE HAVE ON STRAIGHTTALK TO-DAY, DOCTOR. BUT I'M SURE THE RIGHTS OF THE FEW WHO MIGHT BE INTERRED WILL HAVE TO BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE RIGHTS OF THE MANY TO BE SAFE FROM LYCANTHROPIC FIENDS.
NO, WAIT! I DIDN'T SAY...
GOOD LUCK AND GOOD NIGHT.

BOY, THAT KEITH LIME IS SURE SOMETHING.
CLICK
YOU BOYS WANT SOME GUM?
SURE!
YOU BET!
WELL--
AS SOMEONE WHO WAS RECENTLY CLAWED BY A WOLF WHO USED TO BE HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, AND WHO HAILS FROM KANSAS, I DON'T LIKE THIS TALK OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS MUCH.
OH, THAT'S JUST HOW LIME TALKS. YOU KNOW, THEY SAY HE MIGHT TRY FOR MAYOR NEXT TI
GGGGRRRRRRR
LOOK OUT!
YIPE!
OH-OH... I THINK HE DOESN'T LIKE US MUCH.
HADJI! REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE BEING CHASED DOWN THAT ALLEY IN ISTANBUL? REMEMBER THE SIGNAL? ONE... TWO... THREE...
RED LIGHT!

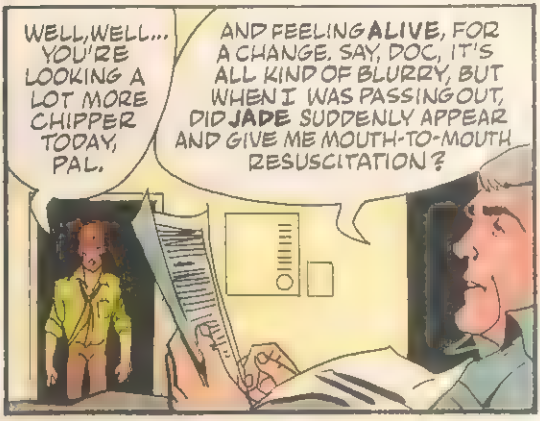
GRRROOO...
HOT SOU
...YEEEE?
KRRASSH!
GRROOOOAN!
BOY, ANOTHER ONE. PRETTY SOON WE WON'T HAVE ENOUGH GUARDS TO HOLD THEM ALL... THEN WE'LL HAVE TO START SHOOTING IN EARNEST.
'COURSE, IN A COUPLE MORE DAYS IT WON'T MATTER WE'LL ALL BE WEREWOLVES!
DRRRING!
UM... HULLO?
HELLO? HELLO? IS THIS KEYS-LAND GENERAL? I HAVE TO TALK TO SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY.. QUICKLY!

THERE'S ONE OF THOSE CREATURES...WEREWOLVES IN MY GARAGE! I'M SO FRIGHTENED. YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!
I DO NOT THINK THERE ARE ANY GUARDS AVAILABLE, JONNY.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
DON'T WORRY, MA'AM. TWO OF OUR BEST MEN WILL BE RIGHT OVER.
HOSPITAL
ADMITTA
I DO NOT THINK THIS IS A GOOD IDEA, JONNY.
THIS IS IT. WELL, SOMEBODY'S GOT TO HELP HER AND I GUESS IT'S US...

UH... MA'AM...? IS ANYONE...?
ARE YOU HUMAN? THE TV SAYS THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF WERE-WOLVES ROAMING THE STREETS, NOBODY'S SAFE! I'VE GOT A GUN! LET ME SEE YOUR ARMS...!
YES, MA'AM... WE'RE HUMAN. WE'RE FROM THE HOSPITAL...
...YOU CALLED AND ASKED FOR HELP? YOU SAID THERE IS A WERE--?
IN BACK! I SAW ONE RUN IN THERE!
ON THE TV THEY SAY WE SHOULD SHOOT THEM ON SIGHT... BUT I COULDN'T JUST KILL IT. IT USED TO BE HUMAN. THAT'S WHY I CALLED YOU PEOPLE!
GOSH, JONNY... DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE A BIG WEREWOLF? HOW WILL WE GET IT OUT OF THERE?
I- I'M NOT SURE, HADJI. MAYBE WE CAN REASON WITH IT...
H-HELLO? IS ANYONE IN HERE...?
OH, GOD... DON'T SHOOT ME... HELP ME... PLEASE...

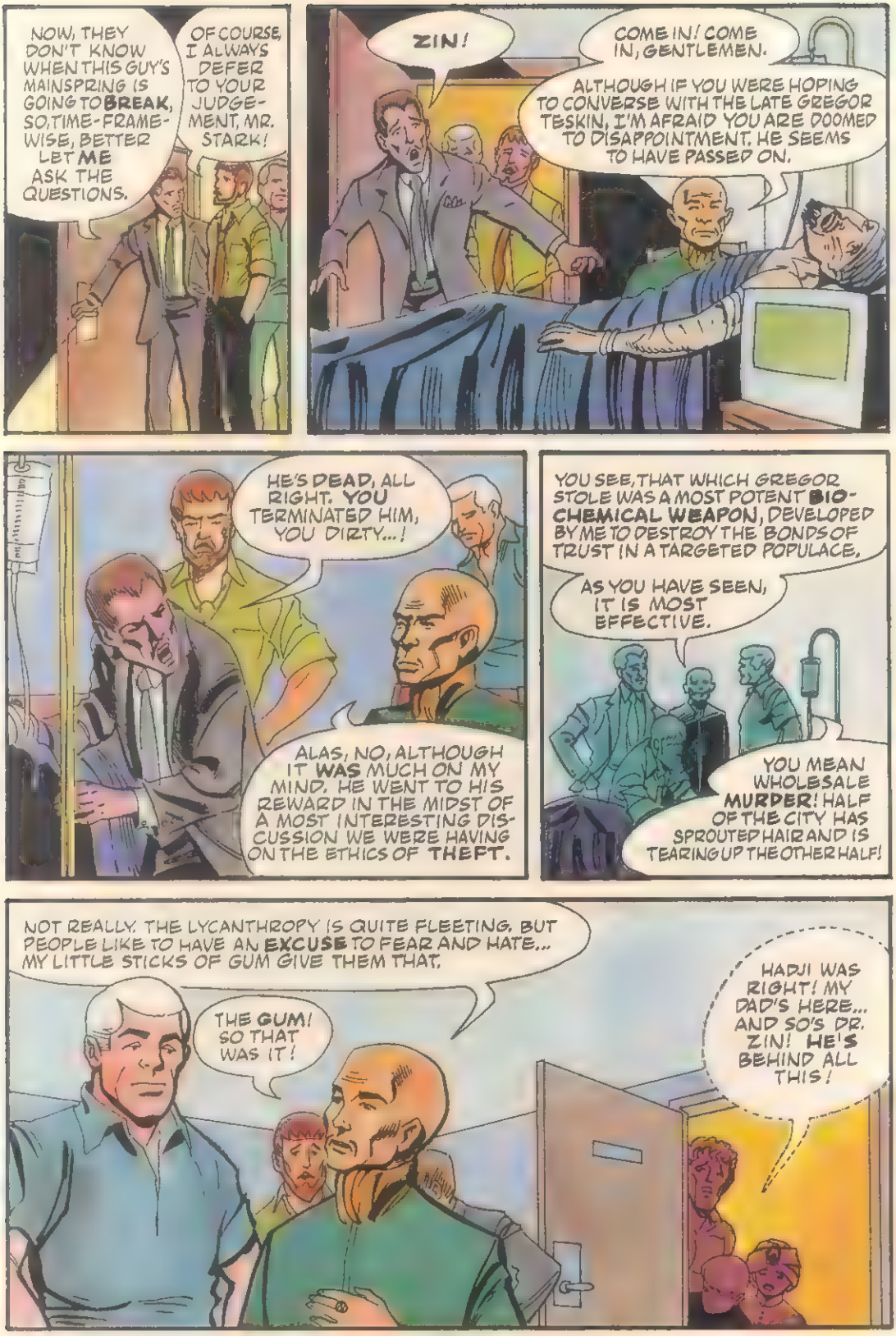


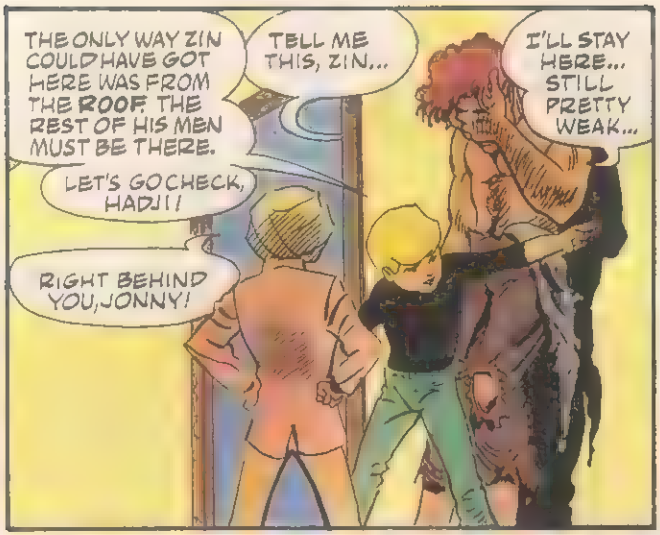
THERE ARE STILL MANY REPORTS OF WEREWOLVES ROAMING THE STREETS, BUT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL HOW MUCH IS **FANTASY**... HYSTERIA IS GRIPPING THE CITY, AND I LOOK FOR WHAT SANCTUARY I CAN...

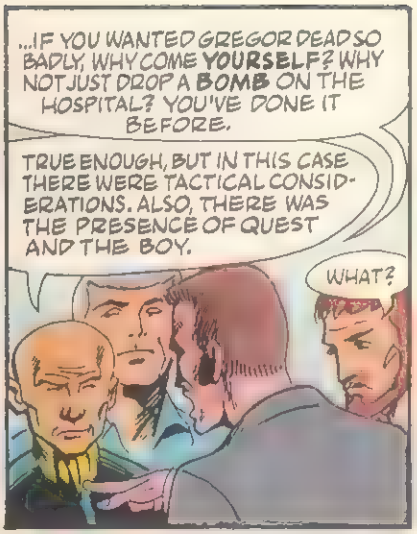


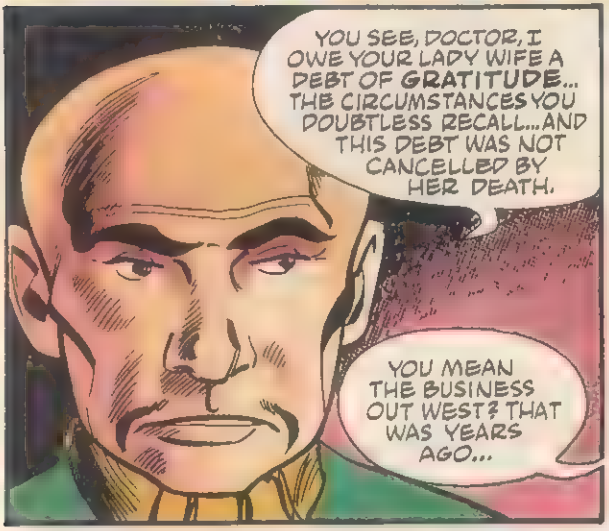
I SAW THE LITTLE SHOW YOU AND LIME PUT ON THIS AFTERNOON.
YES, WELL, I DON'T THINK I HANDLED MYSELF TOO BADLY, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
DOC, HE ATE YOU ALIVE!
I KNOW. WE'VE BEEN GETTING GUNSHOT PATIENTS, PEOPLE SHOT BECAUSE THEY MIGHT TURN INTO WOLVES. A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO, A CAR WAS OVERTURNED AND SET ON FIRE BECAUSE IT HAD KANSAS PLATES!
WHAT DO YOU HAVE THERE?
SOMETHING TO KEEP BUSY. I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING UNUSUAL, SOME CHANGE IN THE HOSPITAL ROUTINE THAT COULD EXPLAIN ALL THIS.
FIND ANYTHING?
MAYBE. THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CIRCUS STARTED, A MAN WAS FOUND RIDDLED WITH BULLETS OUTSIDE THE NORTH ENTRANCE. THEY'VE BEEN KEEPING HIM ALIVE WITH LUCK AND PRAYER, BUT THAT CAN'T LAST FOREVER.
YOU THINK I SHOULD TRY TO INTERVIEW HIM?
UH-UH. WE SHOULD. THEY'VE BEEN BUGGING ME TO GET MORE EXERCISE... AND I GUESS WALKING TO THE NEXT FLOOR SHOULD BE ABOUT RIGHT.
I TRY NOT TO SMILE. RACE KNOWS WHAT A TERRIBLE INTERROGATOR I AM.
MIND IF I COME ALONG, TOO?
STARK!

IT'S A FREE COUNTRY, STARK, BUT WHAT'S THE GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN THIS?
LET ME TELL YOU A STORY, QUEST. IT'S ABOUT ONE OF MY SNITCHES, A PIECE OF BAD CHANGE CALLED GREGOR.
GREGOR DID A BAD THING ONE DAY AND WANTED ME TO FIX IT...
...I TOLD HIM I COULDN'T, UNLESS HE DID SOMETHING WONDERFUL FOR ME. HE WORKED FOR A CRIME BOSS, REALLY BIG, AND I TOLD HIM IF HE LIBERATED SOMETHING VALUABLE FROM THIS BOSS, WELL, I'D SEE WHAT I COULD DO.
I KNOW I'M GOING TO HATE ASKING THIS, BUT WHO WAS THE REALLY BIG BOSS YOUR GUY TRIED TO STEAL FROM?
DR. ZIN.
DR. ZIN? YOU BRIBED SOME THUG TO STEAL SECRETS FROM ZIN? HE'S GOT THE MOST DANGEROUS COLLECTION OF SCIENTIFIC MADNESS IN THE WORLD! THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT YOU COULD UNLEASH!
FROM THE TAB OF THE LAST COUPLE DAYS, QUEST I'D SAY YOU WERE RIGHT.
QUESTION IS, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT NOW?
DING
I'M NOT SURE. I THOUGHT ZIN WAS IN PRISON.
ESCAPED LAST WEEK. HE'S A SCIENTIFIC GENIUS, RIGHT? SO WHERE DO THEY PUT HIM? IN THE MACHINE SHOP!
TERRIFIC.


NOW, THEY DON'T KNOW WHEN THIS GUY'S MAINSPRING IS GOING TO BREAK, SO, TIME-FRAME-WISE, BETTER LET ME ASK THE QUESTIONS.
OF COURSE, I ALWAYS DEFER TO YOUR JUDGE-MENT, MR. STARK!
ZIN!
COME IN! COME IN, GENTLEMEN.
ALTHOUGH IF YOU WERE HOPING TO CONVERSE WITH THE LATE GREGOR TESKIN, I'M AFRAID YOU ARE DOOMED TO DISAPPOINTMENT. HE SEEMS TO HAVE PASSED ON.
HE'S DEAD, ALL RIGHT. YOU TERMINATED HIM, YOU DIRTY...!
ALAS, NO, ALTHOUGH IT WAS MUCH ON MY MIND. HE WENT TO HIS REWARD IN THE MIDST OF A MOST INTERESTING DISCUSSION WE WERE HAVING ON THE ETHICS OF THEFT.
YOU SEE, THAT WHICH GREGOR STOLE WAS A MOST POTENT BIO-CHEMICAL WEAPON, DEVELOPED BY ME TO DESTROY THE BONDS OF TRUST IN A TARGETED POPULACE.
AS YOU HAVE SEEN, IT IS MOST EFFECTIVE.
YOU MEAN WHOLESALE MURDER! HALF OF THE CITY HAS SPROUTED HAIR AND IS TEARING UP THE OTHER HALF!
NOT REALLY. THE LYCANTHROPY IS QUITE FLEETING, BUT PEOPLE LIKE TO HAVE AN EXCUSE TO FEAR AND HATE... MY LITTLE STICKS OF GUM GIVE THEM THAT.
THE GUM! SO THAT WAS IT!
HADJI WAS RIGHT! MY DAD'S HERE... AND SO'S DR. ZIN! HE'S BEHIND ALL THIS!


THE ONLY WAY ZIN COULD HAVE GOT HERE WAS FROM THE ROOF. THE REST OF HIS MEN MUST BE THERE.
TELL ME THIS, ZIN...
I'LL STAY HERE... STILL PRETTY WEAK...
LET'S GO CHECK, HADJI!
RIGHT BEHIND YOU, JONNY!


...IF YOU WANTED GREGOR DEAD SO BADLY, WHY COME YOURSELF? WHY NOT JUST DROP A BOMB ON THE HOSPITAL? YOU'VE DONE IT BEFORE.
TRUE ENOUGH, BUT IN THIS CASE THERE WERE TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS. ALSO, THERE WAS THE PRESENCE OF QUEST AND THE BOY.
WHAT?


YOU SEE, DOCTOR, I OWE YOUR LADY WIFE A DEBT OF GRATITUDE... THE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU DOUBTLESS RECALL... AND THIS DEBT WAS NOT CANCELLED BY HER DEATH.
YOU MEAN THE BUSINESS OUT WEST? THAT WAS YEARS AGO...

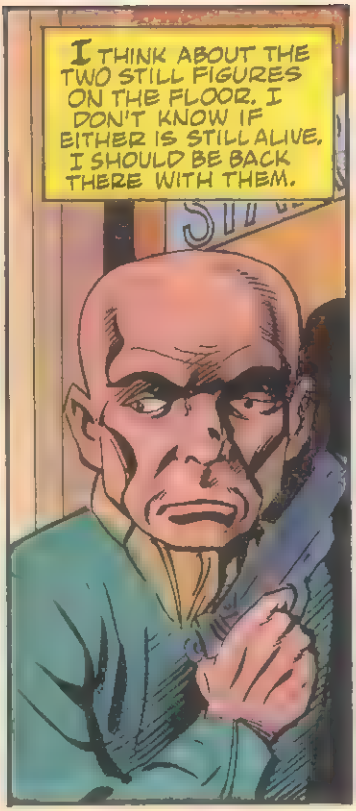
...AND THIS IS NOW! I'M TAKING YOU IN, ZIN! WE'LL DECIDE ON THE CHARGE LATER. HALF THE COUNTRIES ON EARTH WANT YOU FOR SOMETHING!

I THINK NOT. YOU'VE BEEN A BAD BOY, MR. BANNON. I KEEL YOU WEETH MY POISON RING!
WAPT!

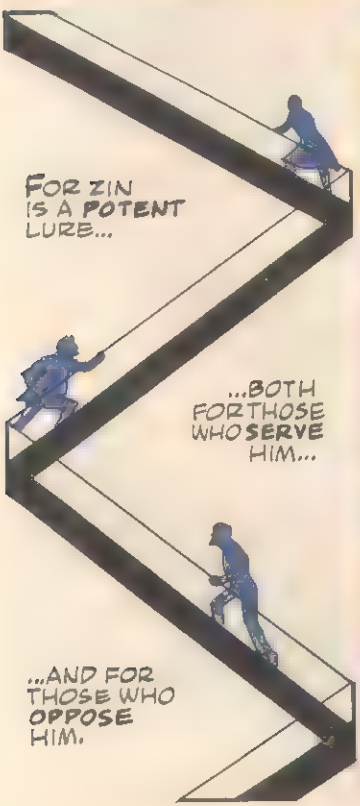
WHAT'S THE IDEA, ZIN? I... rrrrRRRRR...
NOT POISONED, ACTUALLY...

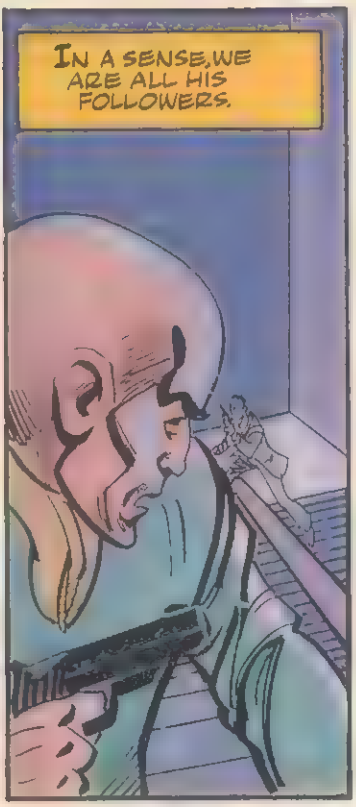
"...JUST NICELY SPICED."
GGGRRROOOARRRR
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
RACE! FOR GOD'S SAKE! LISTEN TO ME!
HE'S BREAKING... MY... RIBS...
NO, YOU DON'T...
I HAVE TO ATONE FOR THE EVIL I'VE DONE... ATONE...
FOOL!
BLAAM!
RACE! RACE!
THE STRAIN OF THE TRANSFORMATION MUST HAVE BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HE'S FAINTED!
ZIN'S ESCAPING! COME ON!

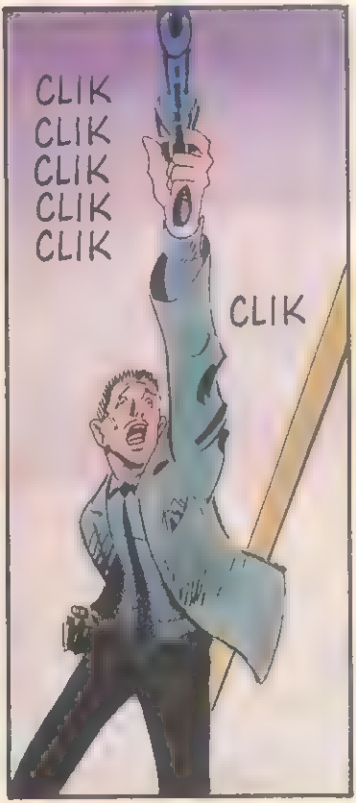
I FOLLOW STARK, WHO FOLLOWS ZIN. ADRENALIN DRIVES ME.
I DON'T BELIEVE WE CAN CATCH HIM, YET STILL I RUN.


I THINK ABOUT THE TWO STILL FIGURES ON THE FLOOR. I DON'T KNOW IF EITHER IS STILL ALIVE. I SHOULD BE BACK THERE WITH THEM.

BUT I AM DRAWN BY STARK'S FOCUSED URGENCY AND BY THE LURE OF ZIN...


FOR ZIN IS A **POTENT** LURE...
...BOTH FOR THOSE WHO **SERVE** HIM...
...AND FOR THOSE WHO **OPPOSE** HIM.


IN A SENSE, WE ARE ALL HIS FOLLOWERS.


CLIK
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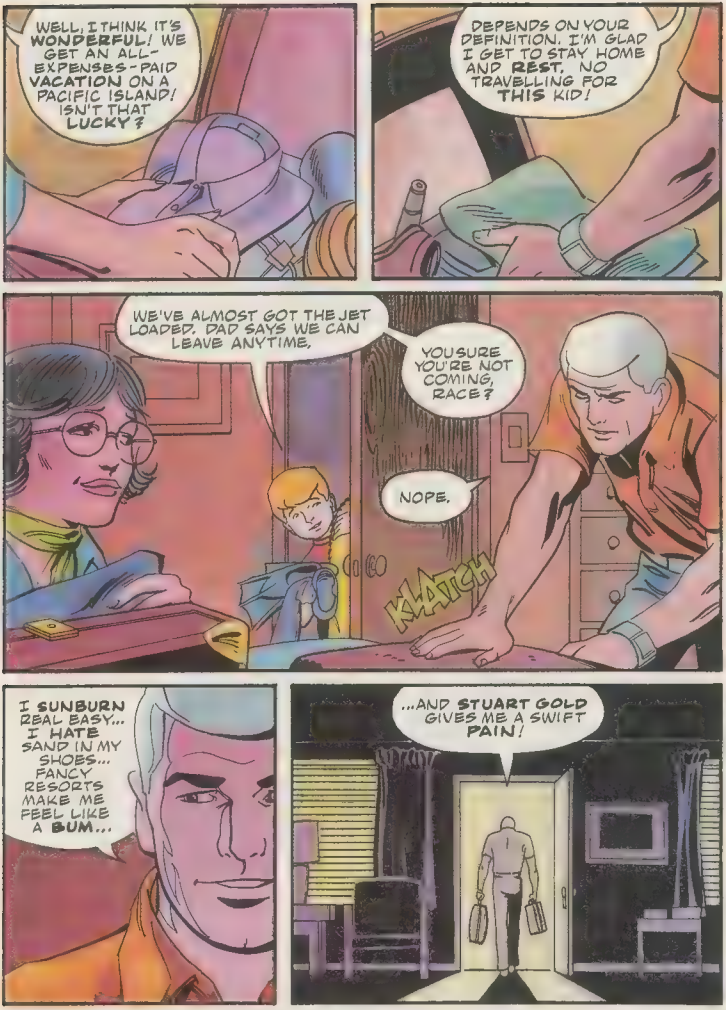
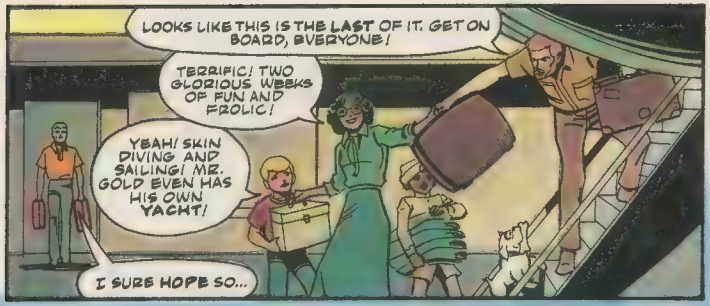
AND NOW WE ARE UNARMED... AND STILL WE FOLLOW HIM.
FOR THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS MAN. SOMETHING WHICH SAYS THAT CATCHING HIM... CATCHING ONE AGING, TIRED CRIMINAL IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN YOUR LIFE.
CLACK!
...MORE IMPORTANT THAN HEALTH OR HONOR OR FAMILY...OR EVEN LIFE ITSELF...
...AND THAT, IF ONLY HE IS CAUGHT, ALL YOUR SINS WILL BE FORGIVEN...
...YOUR LIFE WILL, SOMEHOW, BE WORTHWHILE.

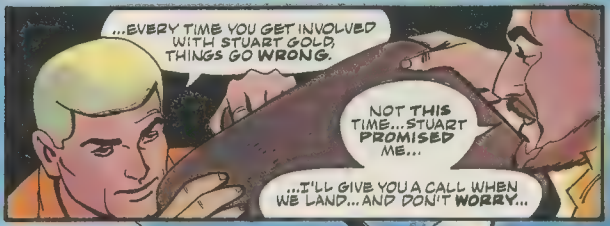
AND NOW WE ARE ON THE ROOF... AND ESCAPE IS BEFORE ZIN...
...BUT SO IS DEFEAT...I CAN HEAR FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS BEHIND ME. SECURITY SQUADS WILL BE HERE SOON.
ONLY A MOMENT'S DELAY...
AND THEN, SUDDENLY, HE IS THERE...BARRING THE WAY. MY ONLY SON. MY BEAUTIFUL, RECKLESS SON...
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, ZIN!
JONNY! NO!
AND I KNOW, JUST AS ZIN KNOWS, THAT THERE IS NO TIME TO DODGE, NO TIME TO STRUGGLE...TO ESCAPE HE MUST SHOOT... BLOW ASIDE THIS FRAIL, OBSTINATE CREATURE AND RUN ON...
AND I AM TOO FAR AWAY AND TOO TIRED TO SAVE MY SON...
THUNK!

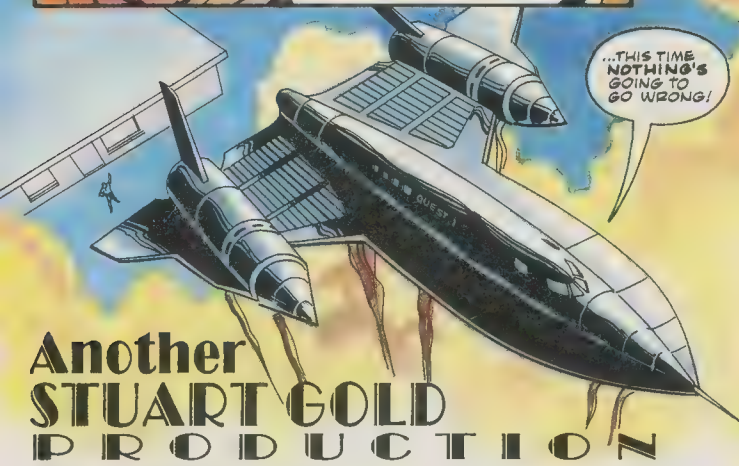
A GOOD RACE, SIR! A GOOD RACE, INDEED! AND YOU HAVE CAUGHT ME FAIR AND SQUARE! PERHAPS ONE DAY WE SHALL HAVE A REMATCH, EH?
UM... YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT... ANYTHING YOU SAY WILL BE USED AGAINST YOU IN A COURT OF LAW...
DAD! DAD! DID YOU SEE? I CAUGHT HIM!
YES, SON. YES, I SAW.
I HAVE GIVEN YOU BACK YOUR SON, DOCTOR. NOW, WE ARE EVEN.
I AM AT YOUR DISPOSAL, GENTLEMEN. KEEP ME IF YOU CAN!

SO THEY TOOK HIM TO SOME BIG, HIGH-SECURITY PRISON TO AWAIT TRIAL.
AND MR. STARK SAYS I MIGHT EVEN GET A MEDAL FOR STOPPING HIM!
SOUNDS GREAT, KID.
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE DUNCAN WEISS WILL BE ALL RIGHT, TOO. BUT HE'LL NEED THERAPY TO ACCEPT THAT WHAT HAPPENED WASN'T HIS FAULT.
HOW ARE YOU DOING, PAL?
NOT BAD. WEAK AS A KITTEN, THOUGH.
I FEEL LIKE AN IDIOT... LETTING ZIN SUCKER ME THAT WAY.
IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT... JUST REMEMBER... "EVEN A MAN WHO IS PURE AT HEART, AND SAYS HIS PRAYERS AT NIGHT, CAN BECOME A WOLF WHEN THE WOLFSBANE BLOOMS AND THE MOON IS FULL..."
"...AND BRIGHT..." OOFF... HEY!
NOW, CUT THAT OUT!
END


WELL, I THINK IT'S WONDERFUL! WE GET AN ALL-EXPENSES-PAID VACATION ON A PACIFIC ISLAND! ISN'T THAT LUCKY?
DEPENDS ON YOUR DEFINITION. I'M GLAD I GET TO STAY HOME AND REST. NO TRAVELLING FOR THIS KID!
WE'VE ALMOST GOT THE JET LOADED. DAD SAYS WE CAN LEAVE ANYTIME.
YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT COMING, RACE?
NOPE.
KRATCH
I SUNBURN REAL EASY... I HATE SAND IN MY SHOES... FANCY RESORTS MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A BUM...
...AND STUART GOLD GIVES ME A SWIFT PAIN!



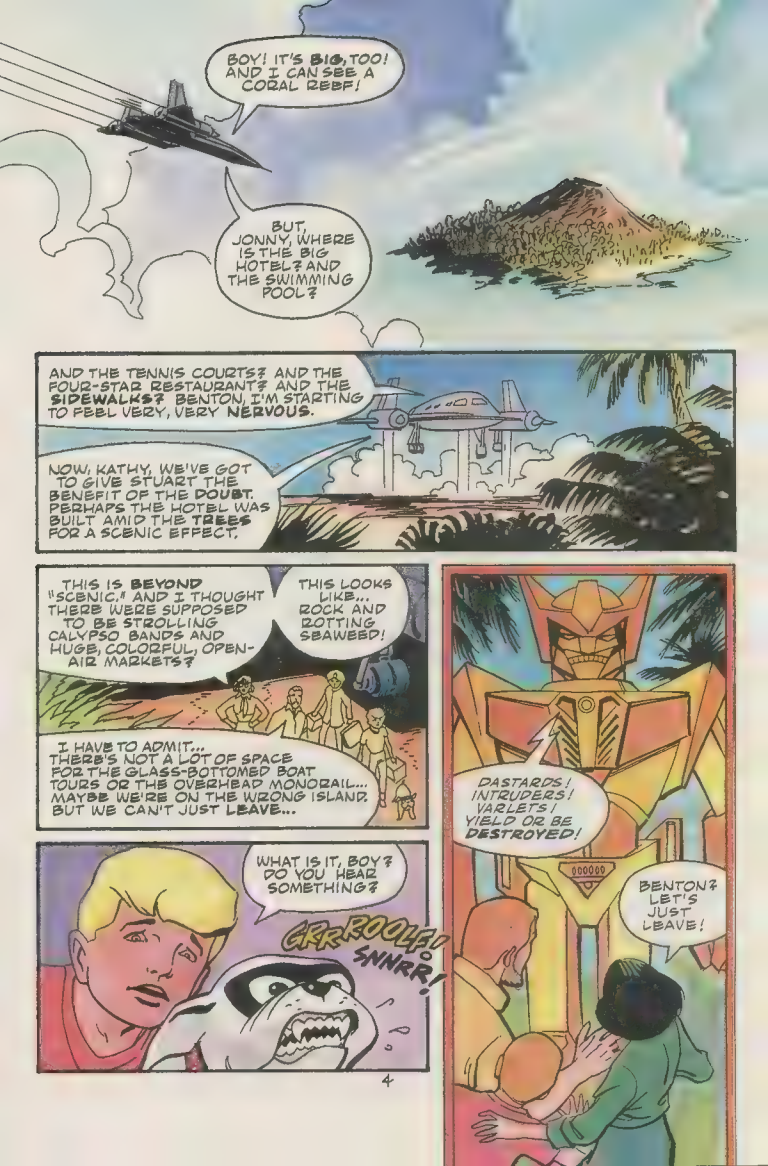


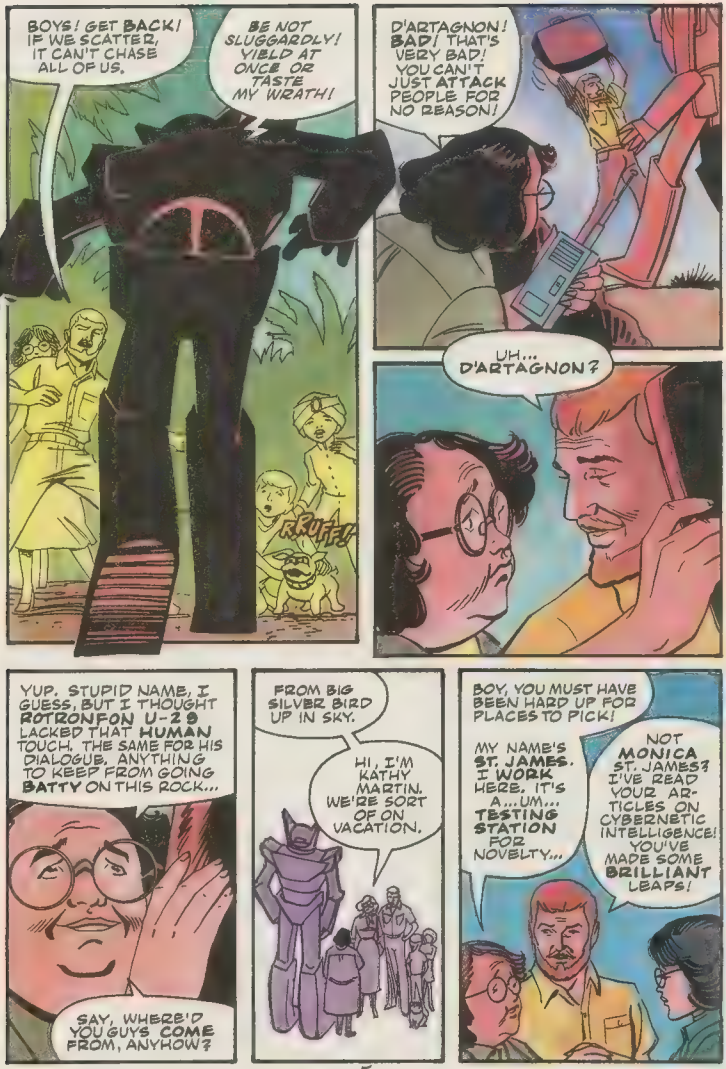


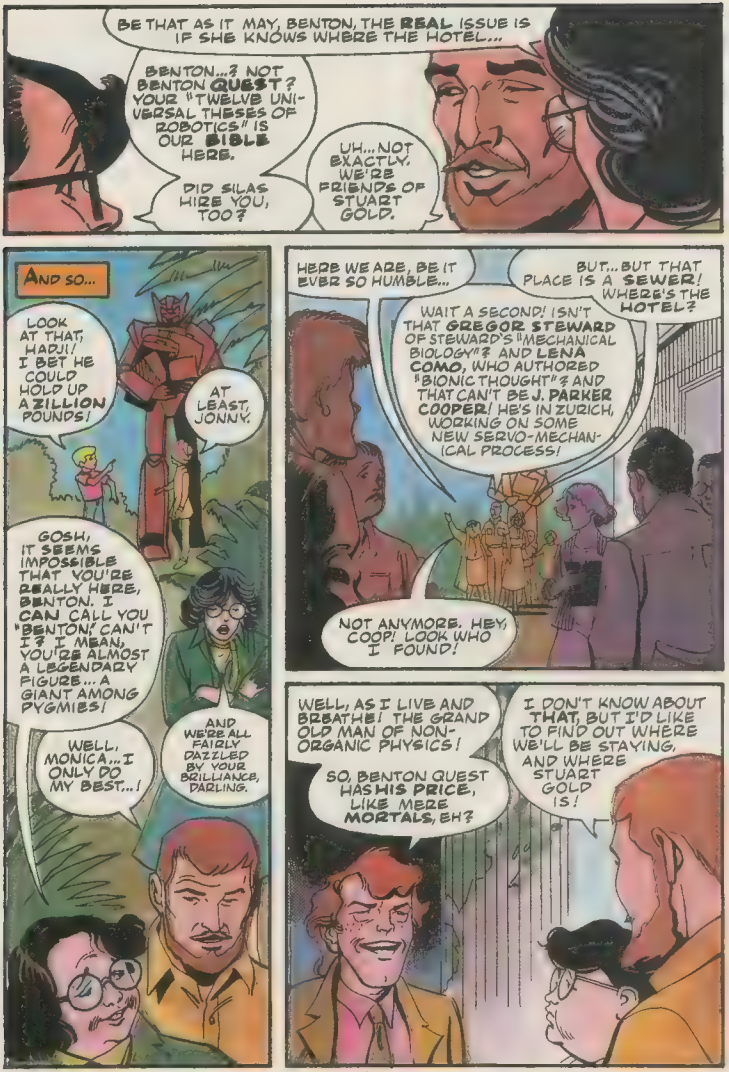
Another STUART GOLD PRODUCTION

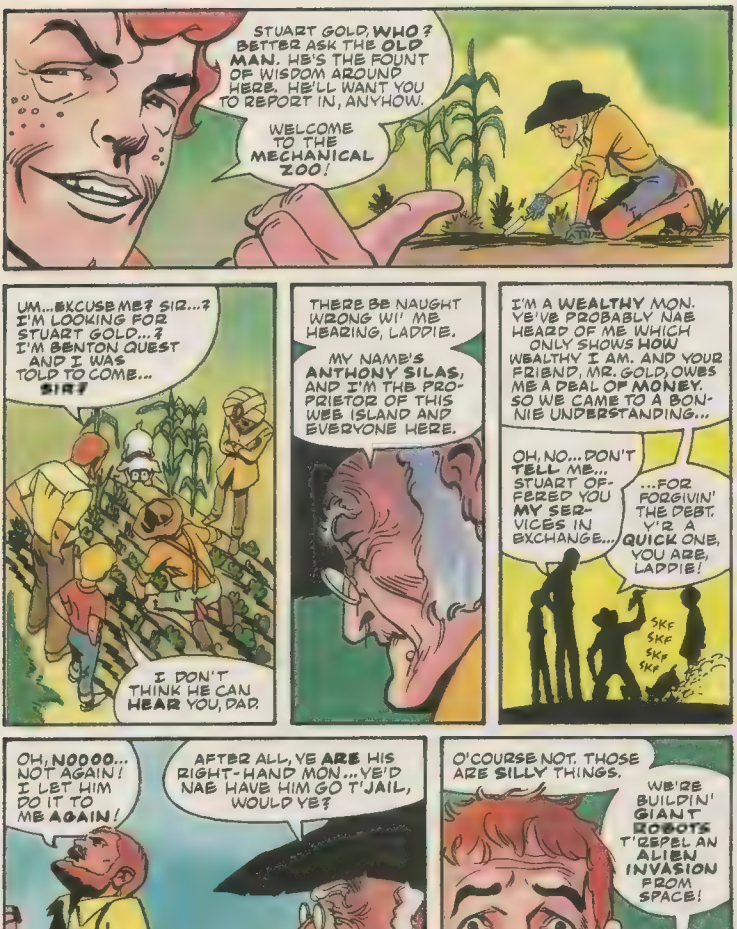
WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS • Direction
MARC HEMPEL, MARK WHEATLEY, KATHRYN MAYER • Cinematography
DIANA SCHUTZ • Gofer

BENTON, ARE YOU SURE THIS VACATION IS SET? STUART GOLD ISN'T THE MOST RESPONSIBLE...
STUART'S ALL RIGHT. HE'S GOTTEN ME IN TROUBLE, BUT WE'VE HAD SOME GREAT TIMES, TOO.
WHEN WE WERE IN COLLEGE, I REMEMBER HOW WE USED TO STAY UP TILL ALL HOURS, STUDYING FOR STUART'S EXAMS...
...AND ALL THE CRAZY THINGS WE'D DO TO PAY STUART'S TUITION...
... AND I REMEMBER THE DAY WE RAN ALL OVER TOWN LOOKING FOR THE DEAN'S DOG AFTER STUART LOST HIM...
UM... BENTON, DEAR, DO YOU NOTICE THAT ALL YOUR "GOOD MEMORIES" ARE ALL TIMES THAT STUART EXPLOITED YOU?
WELL, EVERY FRIENDSHIP HAS ITS UPS AND DOWNS!
LOOK, DAD! IT'S THE ISLAND!


BOY! IT'S BIG, TOO! AND I CAN SEE A CORAL REEF!
BUT, JONNY, WHERE IS THE BIG HOTEL? AND THE SWIMMING POOL?
AND THE TENNIS COURTS? AND THE FOUR-STAR RESTAURANT? AND THE SIDEWALKS? BENTON, I'M STARTING TO FEEL VERY, VERY NERVOUS.
NOW, KATHY, WE'VE GOT TO GIVE STUART THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. PERHAPS THE HOTEL WAS BUILT AMID THE TREES FOR A SCENIC EFFECT.
THIS IS BEYOND "SCENIC," AND I THOUGHT THERE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE STROLLING CALYPSO BANDS AND HUGE, COLORFUL, OPEN-AIR MARKETS?
THIS LOOKS LIKE... ROCK AND ROTTING SEAWEED!
I HAVE TO ADMIT... THERE'S NOT A LOT OF SPACE FOR THE GLASS-BOTTOMED BOAT TOURS OR THE OVERHEAD MONORAIL... MAYBE WE'RE ON THE WRONG ISLAND. BUT WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE...
WHAT IS IT, BOY? DO YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
GRR-ROOLF! SNNRR!
DASTARDS! INTRUDERS! VARLETS! YIELD OR BE DESTROYED!
BENTON? LET'S JUST LEAVE!

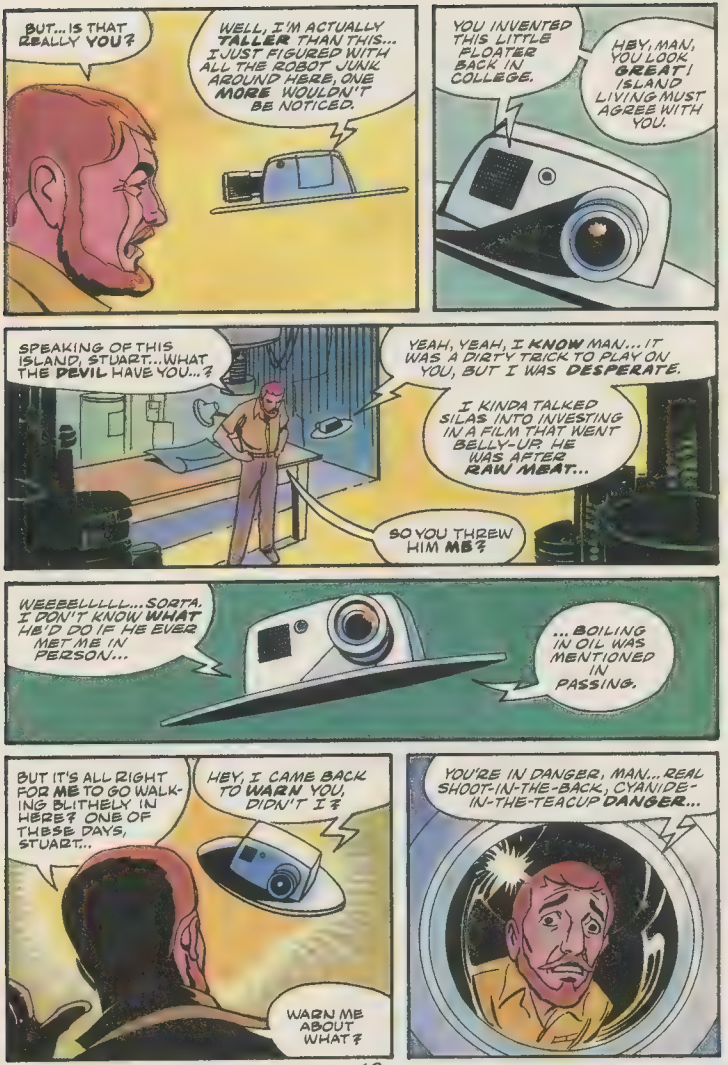

BOYS! GET BACK! IF WE SCATTER, IT CAN'T CHASE ALL OF US.
BE NOT SLUGGARDLY! YIELD AT ONCE OR TASTE MY WRATH!
RRUFF!
D'ARTAGNON! BAD! THAT'S VERY BAD! YOU CAN'T JUST ATTACK PEOPLE FOR NO REASON!
UH... D'ARTAGNON?
YUP. STUPID NAME, I GUESS, BUT I THOUGHT ROTRONFON U-29 LACKED THAT HUMAN TOUCH. THE SAME FOR HIS DIALOGUE. ANYTHING TO KEEP FROM GOING BATTY ON THIS ROCK...
SAY, WHERE'D YOU GUYS COME FROM, ANYHOW?
FROM BIG SILVER BIRD UP IN SKY.
HI, I'M KATHY MARTIN. WE'RE SORT OF ON VACATION.
BOY, YOU MUST HAVE BEEN HARD UP FOR PLACES TO PICK!
MY NAME'S ST. JAMES. I WORK HERE. IT'S A...UM... TESTING STATION FOR NOVELTY...
NOT MONICA ST. JAMES? I'VE READ YOUR ARTICLES ON CYBERNETIC INTELLIGENCE! YOU'VE MADE SOME BRILLIANT LEAPS!


BE THAT AS IT MAY, BENTON, THE REAL ISSUE IS IF SHE KNOWS WHERE THE HOTEL...
BENTON...? NOT BENTON QUEST? YOUR "TWELVE UNIVERSAL THESES OF ROBOTICS" IS OUR BIBLE HERE.
DID SILAS HIRE YOU, TOO?
UH... NOT EXACTLY. WE'RE FRIENDS OF STUART GOLD.
AND SO...
LOOK AT THAT, HARJI! I BET HE COULD HOLD UP A ZILLION POUNDS!
AT LEAST, JONNY.
GOSH, IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE THAT YOU'RE REALLY HERE, BENTON. I CAN CALL YOU "BENTON," CAN'T I? I MEAN, YOU'RE ALMOST A LEGENDARY FIGURE... A GIANT AMONG PYGMIES!
AND WE'RE ALL FAIRLY DAZZLED BY YOUR BRILLIANCE, DARLING.
WELL, MONICA... I ONLY DO MY BEST...!
HERE WE ARE, BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE...
BUT... BUT THAT PLACE IS A SEWER! WHERE'S THE HOTEL?
WAIT A SECOND! ISN'T THAT GREGOR STEWARD OF STEWARD'S "MECHANICAL BIOLOGY"? AND LENA COMO, WHO AUTHORED "BIONIC THOUGHT"? AND THAT CAN'T BE J. PARKER COOPER! HE'S IN ZURICH, WORKING ON SOME NEW SERVO-MECHANICAL PROCESS!
NOT ANYMORE. HEY, COOP! LOOK WHO I FOUND!
WELL, AS I LIVE AND BREATHE! THE GRAND OLD MAN OF NON-ORGANIC PHYSICS!
SO, BENTON QUEST HAS HIS PRICE, LIKE MERE MORTALS, EH?
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, BUT I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHERE WE'LL BE STAYING, AND WHERE STUART GOLD IS!


STUART GOLD, WHO? BETTER ASK THE OLD MAN. HE'S THE FOUNT OF WISDOM AROUND HERE. HE'LL WANT YOU TO REPORT IN, ANYHOW.
WELCOME TO THE MECHANICAL ZOO!
UM...EXCUSE ME? SIR...? I'M LOOKING FOR STUART GOLD...? I'M BENTON QUEST AND I WAS TOLD TO COME... SIR?
I DON'T THINK HE CAN HEAR YOU, DAD.
THERE BE NAUGHT WRONG WI' ME HEARING, LADDIE.
MY NAME'S ANTHONY SILAS, AND I'M THE PROPRIETOR OF THIS WEE ISLAND AND EVERYONE HERE.
I'M A WEALTHY MON. YE'VE PROBABLY NAE HEARD OF ME WHICH ONLY SHOWS HOW WEALTHY I AM. AND YOUR FRIEND, MR. GOLD, OWES ME A DEAL OF MONEY. SO WE CAME TO A BONNIE UNDERSTANDING...
OH, NO... DON'T TELL ME... STUART OFFERED YOU MY SERVICES IN EXCHANGE...
...FOR FORGIVIN' THE DEBT. Y'R A QUICK ONE, YOU ARE, LADDIE!
SKF SKF SKF SKF
OH, NOOOO... NOT AGAIN! I LET HIM DO IT TO ME AGAIN!
AFTER ALL, YE ARE HIS RIGHT-HAND MON... YE'D NAE HAVE HIM GO T'JAIL, WOULD YE?
I'M THINKING IT OVER... WHAT'S IT ABOUT THIS TIME? BUILDING A LAND BRIDGE TO ASIA? TUNNELING UNDER THE PACIFIC OCEAN? FINDING MU?
SKF SKF SKF SKF
O'COURSE NOT. THOSE ARE SILLY THINGS.
WE'RE BUILDIN' GIANT ROBOTS T'REPEL AN ALIEN INVASION FROM SPACE!

HAHAHAHAA! AN ALIEN INVASION?
T'BE SURE, YB MAY LAUGH NOW, BUT IT'S ANOTHER TUNE YE'LL SING WHEN THE BUG-EYED CREEPERS COME AND WRAP THEIR GRBAT, LONG TENTACLES ABOUT YER NECKS.
HAHA-HAHA! GIANT ROBOTS?!
SNURF
AND UNTIL THE INVASION FLEET ARRIVES, THERE'S PLENTY OF HONEST WORK FOR FIGHTING ROBOTS TO DO...
...THOSE ARE MY RUTABAGAS, YE RUDE BEASTY!
SKF SKF SKF
...SUPPRESSING CRIME, FOR EXAMPLE!
CRIME...?
AYE! YE'D BE AMAZED AT THE EFFECT OF A GIANT METAL HAND UPON THE AVERAGE FELON!
THEY GO RIGHT OUT OF THEIR HEADS, BEING THE COWARDLY TYPES THEY ARE!
ENOUGH IDLE CHATTER. YE'LL FIND YBR BUNKS IN WI' THE REST O' 'EM. TAKE AN HOUR TO REFRESH YOURSELVES... THEN I EXPECT YE BANG T'WORK! COOPER'LL SHOW YE AROUND.
NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO!
RIGHT THIS WAY, DOCTOR QUEST. NOT QUITE THE RITZY QUARTERS YOU'RE USED TO, BUT 'TWILL SERVE!
BE SURE TO SHAKE OUT YOUR BLANKETS AT NIGHT. THE LIZARDS AROUND HERE ARE POISONOUS.
NOT AS POISONOUS AS YOUR LOOKS, MY FRIEND!

WELCOME TO MILDEW CITY! IF YOU THINK IT'S MUGGY IN HERE NOW, JUST WAIT TILL NIGHT!
WELL, BENTON... YOU CERTAINLY KNOW HOW TO SHOW A GIRL A GOOD TIME!
AND SO, AN HOUR LATER...
HAVE YOU MADE MUCH PROGRESS ON THESE "GIANT ROBOTS"?
NOT SO'S YOU'D NOTICE, YOU CAN SEE HERE, WE HAVE THE BASIC PLANS FOR THE OUTER SHELLS, BUT MOVING THEM IS AWFUL! NOTHING WORKS... D'ARTAGNON HERE IS AS BIG AS WE'VE GOTTEN.
THOUGH I'M SURE NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE, THE ANSWER IS JUST A BRAINSTORM AWAY!
THIS WHOLE ROBOT THING IS JUST INSANE--YOU REALIZE THAT, DON'T YOU?
SILAS WANTS ROBOTS THE SIZE OF SKYSCRAPERS, BUT AS THE MECHANISMS GROW LARGER, THEIR STRENGTH IS SQUARED BUT THEIR WEIGHT IS CUBED. LONG BEFORE THEY BECOME GIGANTIC, THEY'LL COLLAPSE!
WE ALL WENT TO SCHOOL, QUEST! WHAT WE NEED IS A WAY AROUND IT. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD AT THAT SORT OF THING!
I'M SURE YOU'LL THINK OF SOMETHING, BENTON. I MEAN...YOU'RE THE BEST THERE IS!
RIGHT. LET'S GO GET SOME JAVA WHILE THE GREAT MAN BROODS!
MAYBE IF WE PUT THE WEIGHT-BEARING JOINTS DIRECTLY UNDER...NO, THAT WON'T WORK... IF WE USE A GEODESIC STRUCTURE, THE WHOLE THING WILL BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO SHEAR FORCES...BUT IF...
PSST, BENTON! IS THE COAST CLEAR, MAN?
WHA...? THAT VOICE... STUART!
RIGHT... FANCY MEETING YOU HERE! UM... KEEP IT DOWN THOUGH, MAN. I'M NOT EXACTLY KING OF THE HILL HERE, Y'KNOW?


BUT... IS THAT REALLY YOU?
WELL, I'M ACTUALLY TALLER THAN THIS... I JUST FIGURED WITH ALL THE ROBOT JUNK AROUND HERE, ONE MORE WOULDN'T BE NOTICED.
YOU INVENTED THIS LITTLE FLOATER BACK IN COLLEGE.
HEY, MAN, YOU LOOK GREAT! ISLAND LIVING MUST AGREE WITH YOU.
SPEAKING OF THIS ISLAND, STUART... WHAT THE DEVIL HAVE YOU...?
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW MAN... IT WAS A DIRTY TRICK TO PLAY ON YOU, BUT I WAS DESPERATE.
I KINDA TALKED SILAS INTO INVESTING IN A FILM THAT WENT BELLY-UP. HE WAS AFTER RAW MEAT...
SO YOU THREW HIM MB?
WEEBELLLLL... SORTA. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'D DO IF HE EVER MET ME IN PERSON...
... BOILING IN OIL WAS MENTIONED IN PASSING.
BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO GO WALKING BLITHELY IN HERE? ONE OF THESE DAYS, STUART...
HEY, I CAME BACK TO WARN YOU, DIDN'T I?
WARN ME ABOUT WHAT?
YOU'RE IN DANGER, MAN... REAL SHOOT-IN-THE-BACK, CYANIDE-IN-THE-TEACUP DANGER...

I THINK THE FIRST THING WE SHOULD DO IS FAMILIARIZE OURSELVES WITH THE LOCAL PLANTS.
IT SAYS HERE THAT THERE ARE OVER TWO-THOUSAND POISONOUS AND NON-POISONOUS VARIETIES AT THIS LATITUDE, AND THAT MOST...
LOOK! THERE'S AN AFRICAN VIOLET...MAYBE WE CAN BRING ONE HOME TO SHOW RACE!
YES...HE COLLECTS THEM. BUT I HAVE NEVER SEEN ONE SO LARGE!
BE CAREFUL, BOYS...THERE ARE SINK-HOLES AROUND HERE. YOU HAVE TO BE VERY...
KER-GLUSHH!
KATHY!
I HATE THIS PLACE! I JUST HATE IT!
PERHAPS WE CAN PULL EASIER WITH A BRANCH.
I DON'T MEAN TO RUSH YOU, BUT I THINK THERE ARE LEECHES IN HERE!
UHHHH?... PULL, HADJI!
I AM PULLING!
VIPE!
HELLO. ARE YOU MOVING IN OR JUST PASSING THROUGH?

ACTUALLY, I'M ON THE VERGE OF PASSING OUT. WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
ONE OF LIFE'S SMALL TRAGEDIES. I COULDN'T MAKE IT IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD I NEEDED A PLACE THAT WAS CALM... RELAXING. SO I CAME HERE.
MY NAME'S MILO.
NOW MY NEEDS ARE SIMPLE. THE TREES ARE MY ROOF AND THE GROUND IS MY CARPET! I EAT FRUITS AND BERRIES, AND DRINK CLEAR SPRING WATER. WHAT COULD BE BETTER?
DON'T YOU GET LONELY?
NOT REALLY. IN FACT, THIS PLACE WAS A PARADISE FOR ME UNTIL THAT OLD MAN CAME... WITH HIS GUARDS AND ROBOTS AND FACTORIES! NOW IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO STAY OUT OF THEIR WAY.
HMMM...
I'LL PROBABLY MOVE SOMEWHERE ELSE. SOME PLACE WHERE A PERSON CAN BREATHE FREE...
THAT GLINT IN THE TREES... IT LOOKS LIKE...
KA-CHOW!!
LOOK OUT!

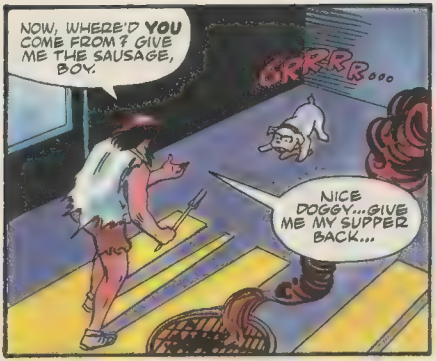
...SO WHEN I HEARD THE RUMOR THAT SOME OLD ENEMY OF SILAS' WAS TRYING TO DESTROY THE PROJECT, I KNEW I HAD TO WARN YOU.
THANKS, STUART. BUT I'D BE MORE GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD FIGURE OUT A WAY FOR THESE GIANT ROBOTS TO STAY TOGETHER.
I DON'T SEE THE PROBLEM.
IT'S JUST TOO HEAVY. A ROBOT THIS SIZE WOULD BE CRUSHED BY ITS OWN WEIGHT.
WELL, CAN'T YOU INVENT AN ANTI-GRAVITY GIZMO TO HOLD 'EM UP...LIKE THIS SAUCER I'M RIDING ON?
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, STUART...I HAVE TINKERED WITH ANTI-GRAVITY, IN A LIMITED WAY...BUT IT'S VERY ENERGY-COSTLY. IT WORKS BEST WITH SMALL DISCS LIKE YOURS...
...WAIT A MINUTE! I THINK THAT'S IT!
IF WE WERE TO INSTALL A COUPLE SMALL ANTI-GRAV UNITS INSIDE EACH JOINT OF THE ROBOTS TO SUPPORT THE WEIGHT...AND THEN COAT THE EXTERIOR SURFACES WITH TREATED SILICON TO GENERATE THE POWER TO RUN THEM...
...IT WOULD WORK! YOU'RE A GENIUS, STUART!
SEE, WE MAKE A GREAT TEAM, BENTON.
YOU'RE TERRIFIC! YOU'RE WONDERFUL! YOU'RE...YOU'RE...
...OH, HELLO, MR. SILAS... UM...
DOCTOR QUEST--MIGHT A POOR OLD MAN INQUIRE... JUST WHAT THE DIVIL YE THINK Y'R DOING?

WELL...UH...ACTUALLY, I WAS... FIXING THIS...UM...RADIO UNIT...AND...UM, WELL...
...THEY WORK BETTER IF YOU... ENCOURAGE THEM...
INDEED. AND HOW IS TH' FLEET OF GIANT ROBOTS COMING? TIME IS MONEY, YE KNOW!
I THINK THE MAJOR PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED WITH ANTI-GRAVITY, WE CAN...
I'M NAE INTERESTED IN THEORY, LADDIE...ONLY RESULTS!
WILL THIS MEAN PRODUCTION WITHIN THE WEEK, THEN?
WELL, PERHAPS SOME PRELIMINARY...
FINE. I'LL HOLD YE TO IT!
AND WHAT WILL THE ROBOTS TURN INTO?
I...DON'T UNDERSTAND...
TURN INTO?
O'COURSE! IF YE'VE GOT GIANT ROBOTS, THEY'VE GOT TO TURN INTO SOMETHING...PLANES, BOATS, MOTORCYCLES...ELSE WHERE'S THE BONNIE SURPRISE? AND HOW CAN THEY FIGHT CRIME WITHOUT SURPRISE? IT'S LOGIC!
WELL, TECHNICALLY, IT'S POSSIBLE, I SUPPOSE...
...BUT YOU'VE GOT TO THINK...! IF A FIFTEEN-TON ROBOT TURNS INTO A SCREWDRIVER, IT'LL BE A FIFTEEN-TON SCREWDRIVER! AND THE SAME GOES FOR CARS OR MOTORBIKES!
IT'S JUST NOT PRACTICAL!
PRACTICALITY CAN BE BOUGHT AND SOLD LIKE ANY OTHER COMMODITY. I'LL EXPECT TO SEE THE FIRST PROTOTYPE WITHIN A WEEK.
GOODBYE, DOCTOR.
OH, STUART...! WHAT HAVE YOU GOTTEN ME INTO THIS TIME?

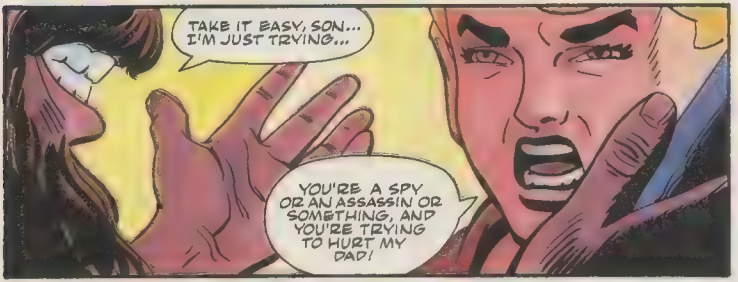
DAD! THERE'S A HERMIT GUY LIVING ON THE ISLAND, BUT HE RAN AWAY 'CAUSE THERE WAS SOMEBODY SHOOTING AT US!
AND SO, A WEEK LATER...
IT LOOKS WONDERFUL, DOCTOR!
WE'RE A COUPLE OF DAYS BEHIND SCHEDULE, BUT EVEN SO, I'M VERY PLEASED. THIS AUTOMATED FACTORY YOU TWO DESIGNED IS A MARVEL. IT TURNS OUT FULLY INTEGRATED, MODULAR UNITS AS FAST AS WE DESIGN THEM.
WELL, WELL... PRAISE FROM THE GREAT MAN! AREN'T WE HONORED?
JUST A MINUTE... I'M GETTING A LITTLE SICK OF THIS 'SNIPE AND RUN' ROUTINE OF YOURS.
HAVE I DONE SOMETHING, OR DO YOU ALWAYS ACT LIKE A TWIT?
GET YOUR HAND OFF ME, "GENIUS"!
WE WERE DOING FINE, UNTIL YOU CAME ALONG!
NOW, MONTHS OF OUR HARD WORK WILL JUST BE PART OF THE LEGEND OF BENTON QUEST!
I SAID, "GET YOUR HAND OFF," GRANDSTANDER!
WAP!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, DOCTOR! IT'S AN HONOR TO HAVE OUR WORK BE ANY PART OF YOUR LEGEND!

PROBLEMS, SWEETHEART?
KIND OF. HALF THE TEAM THINKS I CAN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, AND THE OTHER HALF THINKS I CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT!
AND WE'RE VIRTUAL PRISONERS, BECAUSE WE CAN'T FIND THAT SNIPER... OR YOUR HERMIT!
WHERE ARE THE BOYS?
THEY'RE INSIDE, ARRANGING THEIR SEASHELL COLLECTIONS.
I LIKE THAT. IT PROVIDES HEALTHY OUTSIDE INTERESTS, INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS, AND FACILITATES IDEA-SHARING.
THAT'S VERY... ENLIGHTENED OF YOU, DEAR.
OH, MY. WAS I BEING A SOCIAL WORKER AGAIN?
ONLY A LITTLE.
COME ON. I WANT TO TALK TO SILAS, AND YOU CAN GIVE ME MORAL SUPPORT...
"...THOUGH COME TO THINK OF IT, THEY'VE NEVER HAD ANY INTEREST IN SEASHELLS BEFORE..."
MILO'S TRACKS END HERE, JONNY. HE HAS LEFT THE TRAIL.
I WONDER WHERE HE COULD HAVE GONE? MAYBE BANDIT'S GOT HIS SCENT.
MAYBE NOT.
JONNY! LOOK AT THIS!
ROOF! ROOF!
ANYTOWN, U.S.A.
POP. 0
WOW! I WONDER WHERE THIS CAME FROM...?

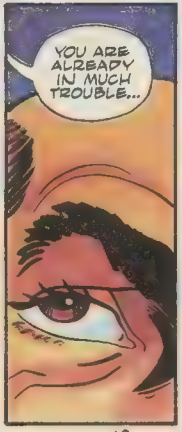
THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT MILO. HE CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN HERE FOR MONTHS, BUT HIS FEET ARE SOFT AND UNCALLOUSED.
I DO NOT TRUST HIM.
YEAH, AND WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM ALL WEEK. NOT SINCE THAT SHOT SCARED HIM OFF.
& TAPES
THIS IS WEIRD. THESE AREN'T REAL BUILDINGS AT ALL.
YES, THEY ARE JUST LIKE A MOVIE SET!
CREAM ICE
OPEN
I DO NOT THINK ANYONE WOULD CHOOSE TO LIVE HERE.
ME EITHER. IT'S TOO...
...HEY! THAT WAS BANDIT!
HEY, BOY! BANDIT!
HE DIDN'T HEAR ME.
SNIFF SNIFF
JONNY? DO YOU SMELL SOMETHING?
"YEAH, I DO... SAUSAGES!"
THIS IS AGENT TWELVE CALLING RINGLEADER... AGENT TWELVE CALLING RINGLEADER...
...C'MON, C'MON... I DON'T HAVE ALL DAY...
HEY!


NOW, WHERE'D YOU COME FROM? GIVE ME THE SAUSAGE, BOY.
GRRRR...
NICE DOGGY...GIVE ME MY SUPPER BACK...

HEY! DON'T YOU HURT MY DOG!
YOU'RE A SPY!
THE KID FROM THE COMPLEX!


TAKE IT EASY, SON... I'M JUST TRYING...
YOU'RE A SPY OR AN ASSASSIN OR SOMETHING, AND YOU'RE TRYING TO HURT MY DAD!

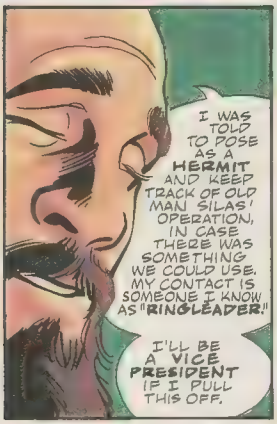
DON'T TALK CRAZY, KID! YOU'LL GET ME IN TROUBLE! I OUGHT TO...

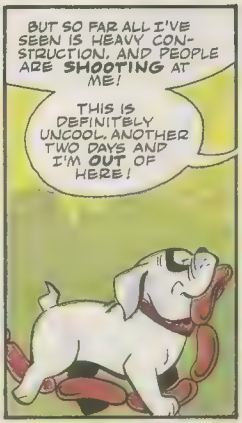

YOU ARE ALREADY IN MUCH TROUBLE...

I GIVE UP! NO PROMOTION IS WORTH THIS!

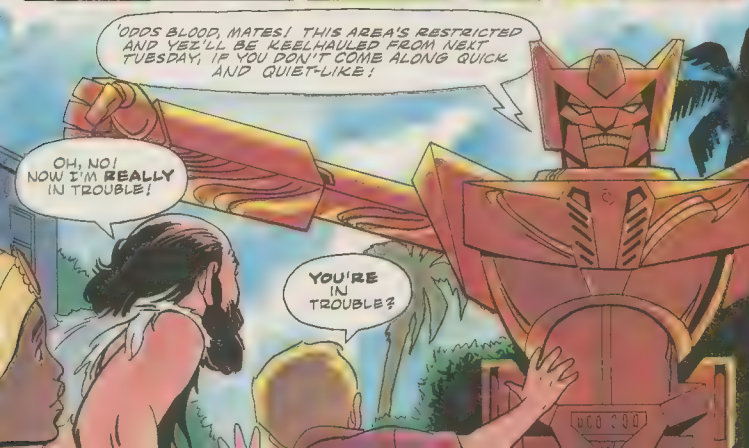
MEANWHILE...
EXCUSE ME, SIR... BUT COULD I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?
O'COURSE, DOCTOR... SIT Y'SELF. I'M JUST TAKING CARE OF SOME NASTY INTRUDERS.
WE'LL BE READY FOR A FULL TEST OF THE ROBOT'S SYSTEMS TOMORROW... BUT THIS MODEL WILL DEMONSTRATE IT'S CAMOUFLAGE ABILITY.
AYE. THAT'S WHAT'S NEEDED! DISGUISE!
DOES IT BECOME A SPACE SHUTTLE? A GUN? A TANK?
WELL, NO... WE HAD TO FIND A WAY TO STORE ITS MASS... TO MAKE IT SEEM LESS OBVIOUS...
KLIK
WRRRRRRRRRR...
GRNK
TRRNG
KA-KLUD!
IT... IT'S A FOOTBALL FIELD.
BUT... THAT'S NAE MOBILE, DOCTOR.
BEST WE COULD DO, I'M AFRAID.
IF IT IS, IT IS.
I'VE HAD BUILT A SMALL VILLAGE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ISLAND, DOCTOR. TOMORROW WE'LL TEST THIS BONNIE MACHINE UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS!

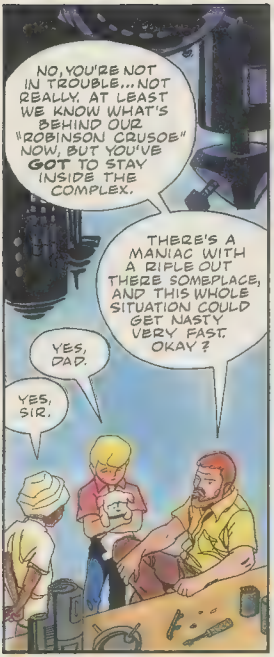
...YOU SEE, I'M NOT REALLY A SPY. AND I WAS WORKING FOR A LARGE CORPORATION... A TOY COMPANY..
BUT THE COMPANY WAS IN TROUBLE. IT'S A HIT-DRIVEN INDUSTRY, AND WE HADN'T HAD A HIT IN YEARS.
59¢
3 for $1
WHAT DID YOU DO THEN?

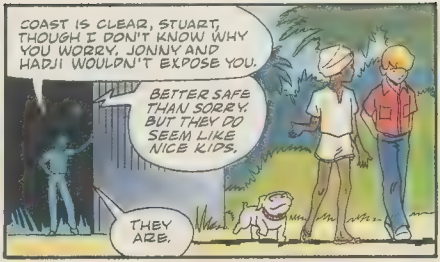

I WAS TOLD TO POSE AS A HERMIT AND KEEP TRACK OF OLD MAN SILAS' OPERATION, IN CASE THERE WAS SOMETHING WE COULD USE. MY CONTACT IS SOMEONE I KNOW AS "RINGLEADER."
I'LL BE A VICE PRESIDENT IF I PULL THIS OFF.

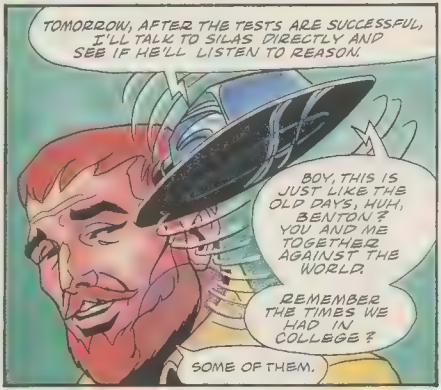

BUT SO FAR ALL I'VE SEEN IS HEAVY CONSTRUCTION, AND PEOPLE ARE SHOOTING AT ME!
THIS IS DEFINITELY UNCOOL. ANOTHER TWO DAYS AND I'M OUT OF HERE!

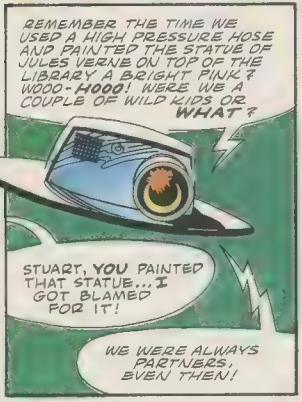
SO YOU GUYS CAN SAY WHAT YOU WANT, BECAUSE...
YOU WILL STAND AND DELIVER, VARLETS!


'ODDS BLOOD, MATES! THIS AREA'S RESTRICTED AND YEZ'LL BE KEELHAULED FROM NEXT TUBSDAY, IF YOU DON'T COME ALONG QUICK AND QUIET-LIKE!
OH, NO! NOW I'M REALLY IN TROUBLE!
YOU'RE IN TROUBLE?


NO, YOU'RE NOT IN TROUBLE... NOT REALLY. AT LEAST WE KNOW WHAT'S BEHIND OUR "ROBINSON CRUSOE" NOW, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO STAY INSIDE THE COMPLEX.
THERE'S A MANIAC WITH A RIFLE OUT THERE SOMEPLACE, AND THIS WHOLE SITUATION COULD GET NASTY VERY FAST. OKAY?
YES, DAD.
YES, SIR.


COAST IS CLEAR, STUART, THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WORRY, JONNY AND HARJI WOULDN'T EXPOSE YOU.
BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY. BUT THEY DO SEEM LIKE NICE KIDS.
THEY ARE.

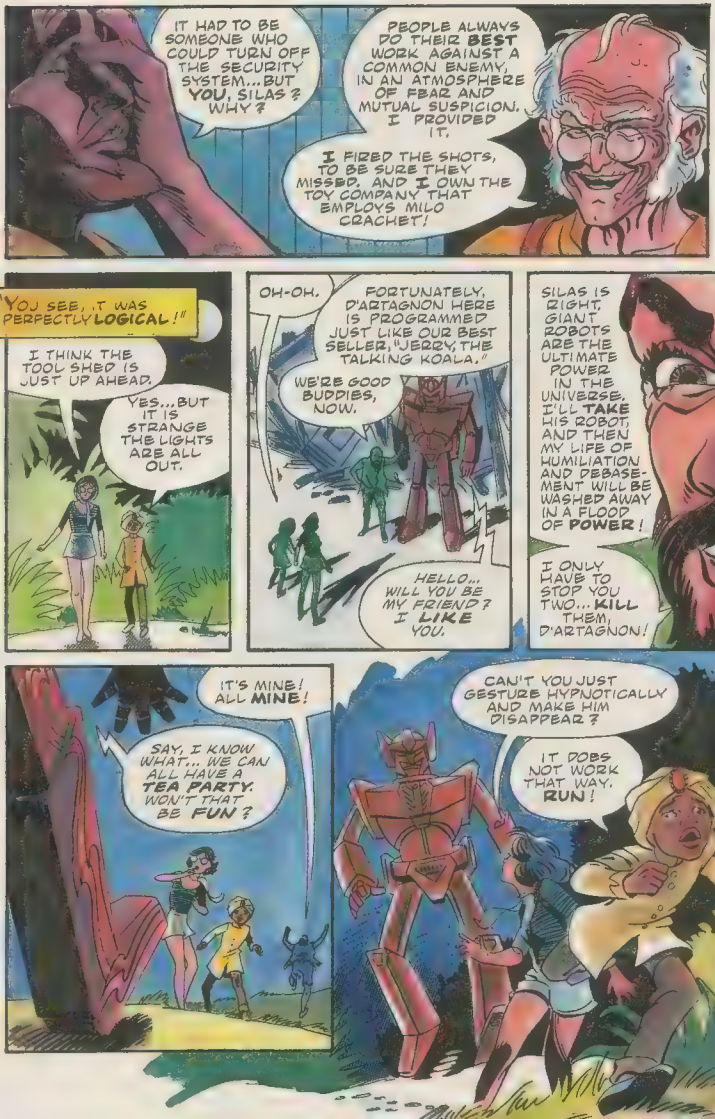

TOMORROW, AFTER THE TESTS ARE SUCCESSFUL, I'LL TALK TO SILAS DIRECTLY AND SEE IF HE'LL LISTEN TO REASON.
BOY, THIS IS JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS, HUH, BENTON? YOU AND ME TOGETHER AGAINST THE WORLD.
REMEMBER THE TIMES WE HAD IN COLLEGE?
SOME OF THEM.


REMEMBER THE TIME WE USED A HIGH PRESSURE HOSE AND PAINTED THE STATUE OF JULES VERNE OU TOP OF THE LIBRARY A BRIGHT PINK? WOOO-HOOO! WERE WE A COUPLE OF WILD KIDS OR WHAT?
STUART, YOU PAINTED THAT STATUE... I GOT BLAMED FOR IT!
WE WERE ALWAYS PARTNERS, EVEN THEN!

I DON'T THINK "PARTNERS" ADEQUATELY DESCRIBES...
HOLD IT, DOC! THIS IS A SNATCH GIG! COME ALONG QUIETLY AND WE WON'T HAVE TO MUSS YA UP!
BOY, MUTTERING TO HISSELF LIKE A SCIENTIST ON ONE OF THEM HORROR MOVIES ON TV!

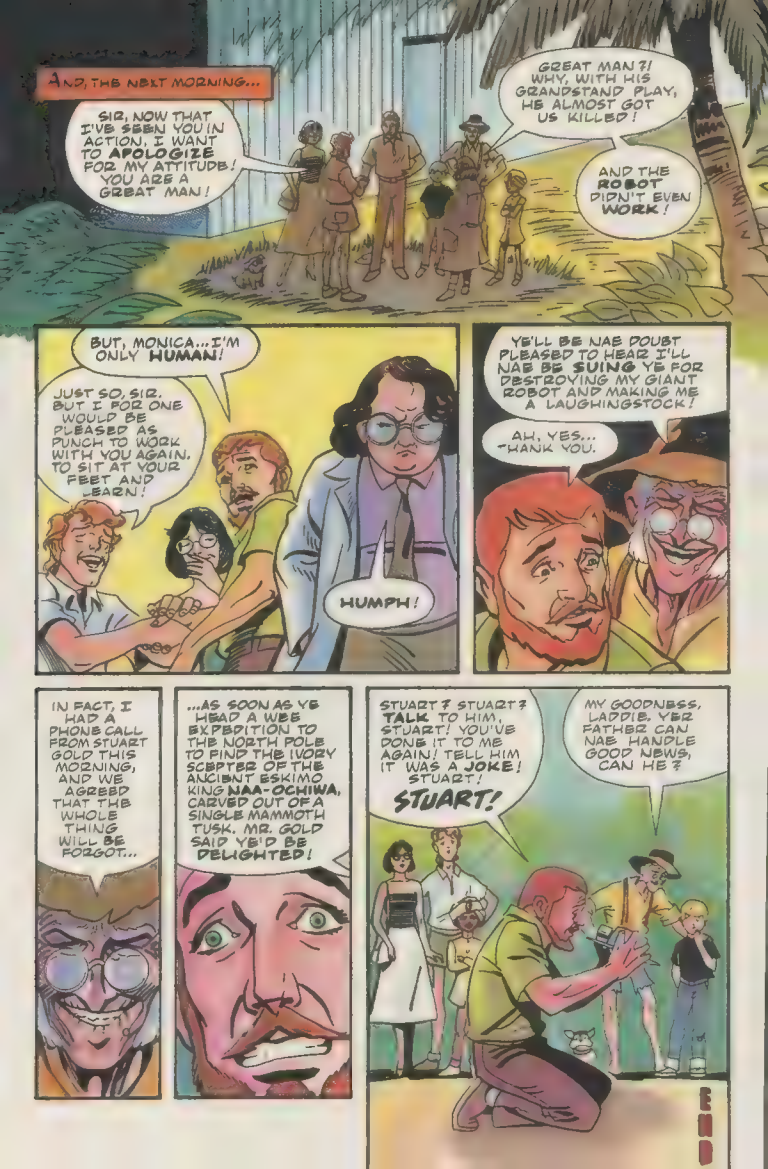
STUART! STUART! DON'T TURN OFF! GET HELP! HURRY!
TALKIN' TO YER TOASTER WON'T HELP YOU, MISTER. GET MOVING!
'SPECIALLY NOT SUCH A STUPID-LOOKIN' TOASTER. THERE'S NOT EVEN A GOOD HOLE TO PUT THE BREAD IN...
"STUPID-LOOKING"...?
SPI
BANG!
TWANG!
HEY, WAIT...
SPRAANG!
YOU SHOULDN'T MAKE MY TOASTER ANGRY.

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...
≥YAARRRWWWFFFF!≤ THIS HAD BETTER BE GOOD, QUEST! DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?
WHY'D YOU SET OFF THE ALARM?
GRACIOUS AS ALWAYS, MR. COOPER. MEET THE BAD GUYS.
SO THESE ARE THE TWO MONSTERS WHO SHOOT AT INNOCENT CHILDREN? I OUGHT TO...
HEY, LADY... WE NEVER SHOT AT NOBODY! THIS GUY CALLED "THE RINGLEADER" HIRED US TO SCARE YOU!
YEAH... WOULDN'T LET US USE LIVE AMMO! WE COULDA BEEN KILLED!
KATHY, YOU AND HADJI GO GET MILO. I THINK IT'S TIME WE HAD ALL THE PLAYERS IN ONE ROOM.
D'ARTAGNON IS WATCHING HIM, SO YOU WON'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE.
RIGHT, CHIEF. LEAVE HIM TO US.
NOW, SUPPOSE YOU LOOK US OVER AND TELL US... JUST WHICH ONE HERE HIRED YOU?
OH, THAT'S EASY...
IT WAS HIM!


IT HAD TO BE SOMEONE WHO COULD TURN OFF THE SECURITY SYSTEM...BUT YOU, SILAS? WHY?
PEOPLE ALWAYS DO THEIR BEST WORK AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY, IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR AND MUTUAL SUSPICION. I PROVIDED IT.
I FIRED THE SHOTS, TO BE SURE THEY MISSED. AND I OWN THE TOY COMPANY THAT EMPLOYS MILO CRACHET!
"YOU SEE, IT WAS PERFECTLY LOGICAL!"
I THINK THE TOOL SHED IS JUST UP AHEAD.
YES...BUT IT IS STRANGE THE LIGHTS ARE ALL OUT.
OH-OH.
FORTUNATELY, D'ARTAGNON HERE IS PROGRAMMED JUST LIKE OUR BEST SELLER, "JERRY, THE TALKING KOALA."
WE'RE GOOD BUDDIES, NOW.
HELLO... WILL YOU BE MY FRIEND? I LIKE YOU.
SILAS IS RIGHT. GIANT ROBOTS ARE THE ULTIMATE POWER IN THE UNIVERSE. I'LL TAKE HIS ROBOT, AND THEN MY LIFE OF HUMILIATION AND DEBASEMENT WILL BE WASHED AWAY IN A FLOOD OF POWER!
I ONLY HAVE TO STOP YOU TWO...KILL THEM, D'ARTAGNON!
IT'S MINE! ALL MINE!
SAY, I KNOW WHAT... WE CAN ALL HAVE A TEA PARTY. WON'T THAT BE FUN?
CAN'T YOU JUST GESTURE HYPNOTICALLY AND MAKE HIM DISAPPEAR?
IT DOES NOT WORK THAT WAY. RUN!

HAVE YOU SEEN OUR FRIEND, MR. BUMBLE-RABBIT? HE'S ALWAYS HAVING ADVENTURES!
HADJI!
UHHH!
MAYBE WE CAN ALL GO SAILING! CAN YOU SING A SAILING SONG? THIS ONE GOES:
Our pretty ship is on the waves...
I like it more than candy canes, and when I taste... sssKREEE...
KRATKCH!
OOPS! I HAVEN'T GOT ALL THE CONTROLS LEARNED YET... BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER...
HEY! WHAT'S THIS?
JUST A TRICK I LEARNED FROM A FRIEND!
...BECAUSE I AM INVINCIBLE!

THESE VAPOR VENTS JUST BLOW IT AWAY. I CAN'T BE STOPPED!
I-I CAN'T KEEP CONTROL! EVERYTHING'S FAILING AT ONCE!
THAT'S FUNNY... THE CONTROLS AREN'T RESPONDING. THE MOTORS ARE LOSING POWER...
CRRUNCH...ASSH!
JUST AS I WAS AFRAID ...RUST!
IN THIS CLIMATE, MICROPROCESSORS CORRODE AT GREAT SPEED. AND ONCE ONE PART WENT, IT DREW POWER FROM THE REST.
AND THE IRONY IS, MACHINERY THIS SIZE ISN'T INVULNERABLE, BUT MORE VULNERABLE... ANY FLAW CAN DESTROY IT.


AND, THE NEXT MORNING...
SIR, NOW THAT I'VE SEEN YOU IN ACTION, I WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR MY ATTITUDE! YOU ARE A GREAT MAN!
GREAT MAN?! WHY, WITH HIS GRANDSTAND PLAY, HE ALMOST GOT US KILLED!
AND THE ROBOT DIDN'T EVEN WORK!
BUT, MONICA... I'M ONLY HUMAN!
JUST SO, SIR. BUT I FOR ONE WOULD BE PLEASED AS PUNCH TO WORK WITH YOU AGAIN, TO SIT AT YOUR FEET AND LEARN!
HUMPH!
YE'LL BE NAE DOUBT PLEASED TO HEAR I'LL NAE BE SUING YE FOR DESTROYING MY GIANT ROBOT AND MAKING ME A LAUGHINGSTOCK!
AH, YES... -THANK YOU.
IN FACT, I HAD A PHONE CALL FROM STUART GOLD THIS MORNING, AND WE AGREED THAT THE WHOLE THING WILL BE FORGOT...
...AS SOON AS YE HEAD A WEE EXPEDITION TO THE NORTH POLE TO FIND THE IVORY SCEPTER OF THE ANCIENT ESKIMO KING NAA-OCHIWA, CARVED OUT OF A SINGLE MAMMOTH TUSK. MR. GOLD SAID YE'D BE DELIGHTED!
STUART? STUART? TALK TO HIM, STUART! YOU'VE DONE IT TO ME AGAIN! TELL HIM IT WAS A JOKE! STUART!
STUART!
MY GOODNESS, LADDIE. YER FATHER CAN NAE HANDLE GOOD NEWS, CAN HE?
THE END

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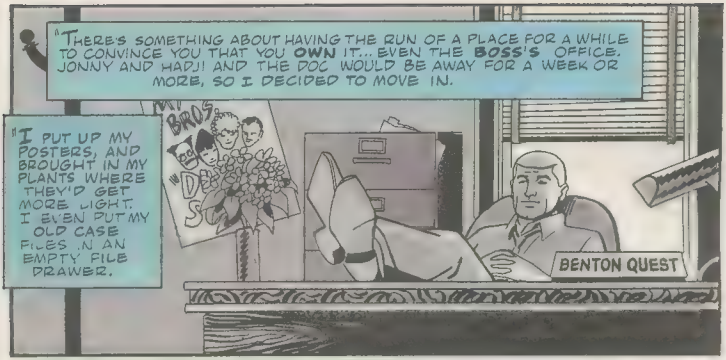
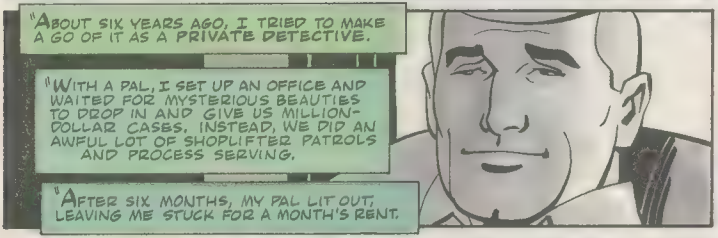
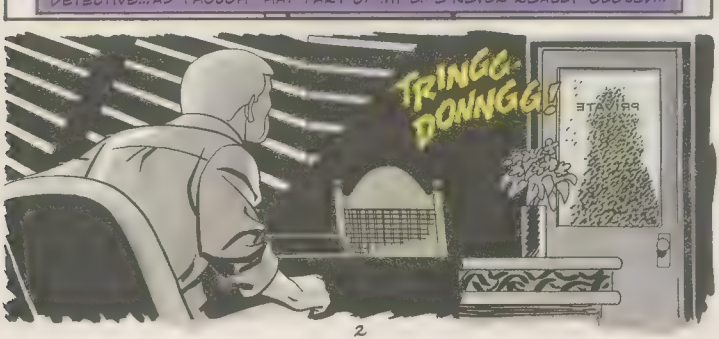
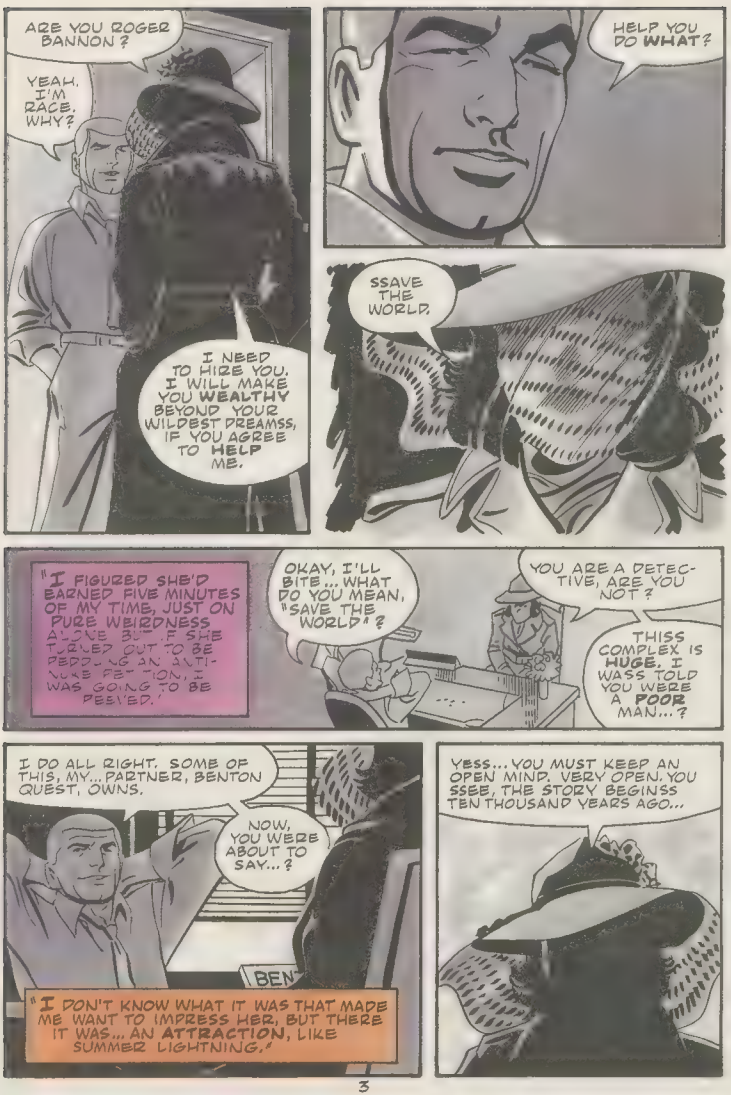
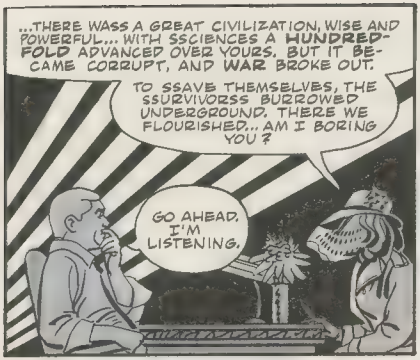

"There's something about having the run of a place for a while to convince you that you OWN it... even the BOSS'S office. Jonny and Hadji and the Doc would be away for a week or more, so I decided to move in.
"I put up my posters, and brought in my plants where they'd get more light. I even put my old case files in an empty file drawer.
BENTON QUEST

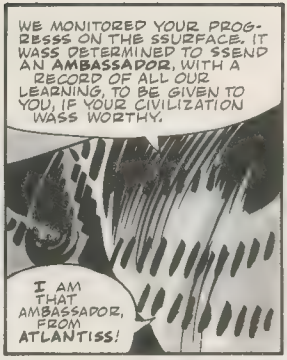

"About six years ago, I tried to make a go of it as a PRIVATE DETECTIVE.
"With a pal, I set up an office and waited for mysterious beauties to drop in and give us million-dollar cases. Instead, we did an awful lot of shoplifter patrols and process serving.
"After six months, my pal lit out, leaving me stuck for a month's rent.

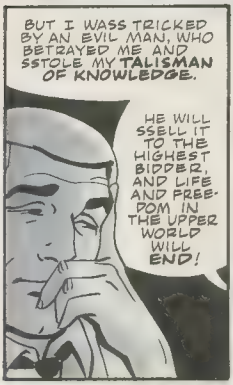
"I ended up joining the AGENCY and never looked back.
"Still there's a part of me that loves the IDEA of being a detective... as though that part of my life never really closed..."


TRINGG-DONNGG!

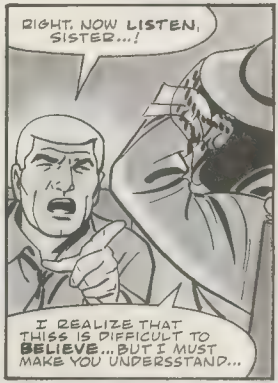

ARE YOU ROGER BANNON?
YEAH. I'M RACE. WHY?
I NEED TO HIRE YOU. I WILL MAKE YOU WEALTHY BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMSS, IF YOU AGREE TO HELP ME.
HELP YOU DO WHAT?
SSAVE THE WORLD.
"I FIGUZED SHE'D BARNED FIVE MINUTES OF MY TIME, JUST ON PURE WEIRDNESS ALONE BUT F SHE TURNED OUT TO BE PEDDLING AN ANTI-NUKE PETITION, I WAS GOING TO BE PEEVED."
OKAY, I'LL BITE... WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "SAVE THE WORLD"?
YOU ARE A DETECTIVE, ARE YOU NOT?
THISS COMPLEX IS HUGE. I WASS TOLD YOU WERE A POOR MAN...?
I DO ALL RIGHT. SOME OF THIS, MY... PARTNER, BENTON QUEST, OWNS.
NOW, YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY...?
BEN
"I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS THAT MADE ME WANT TO IMPRESS HER, BUT THERE IT WAS... AN ATTRACTION, LIKE SUMMER LIGHTNING."
YESS... YOU MUST KEEP AN OPEN MIND. VERY OPEN. YOU SSEE, THE STORY BEGINSS TEN THOUSAND YEARS AGO...


...THERE WASS A GREAT CIVILIZATION, WISE AND POWERFUL... WITH SSCIENCES A HUNDRED-FOLD ADVANCED OVER YOURS. BUT IT BECAME CORRUPT, AND WAR BROKE OUT.
TO SSAVE THEMSELVES, THE SSURVIVORSS BURROWED UNDERGROUND. THERE WE FLOURISHED... AM I BORING YOU?
GO AHEAD. I'M LISTENING.

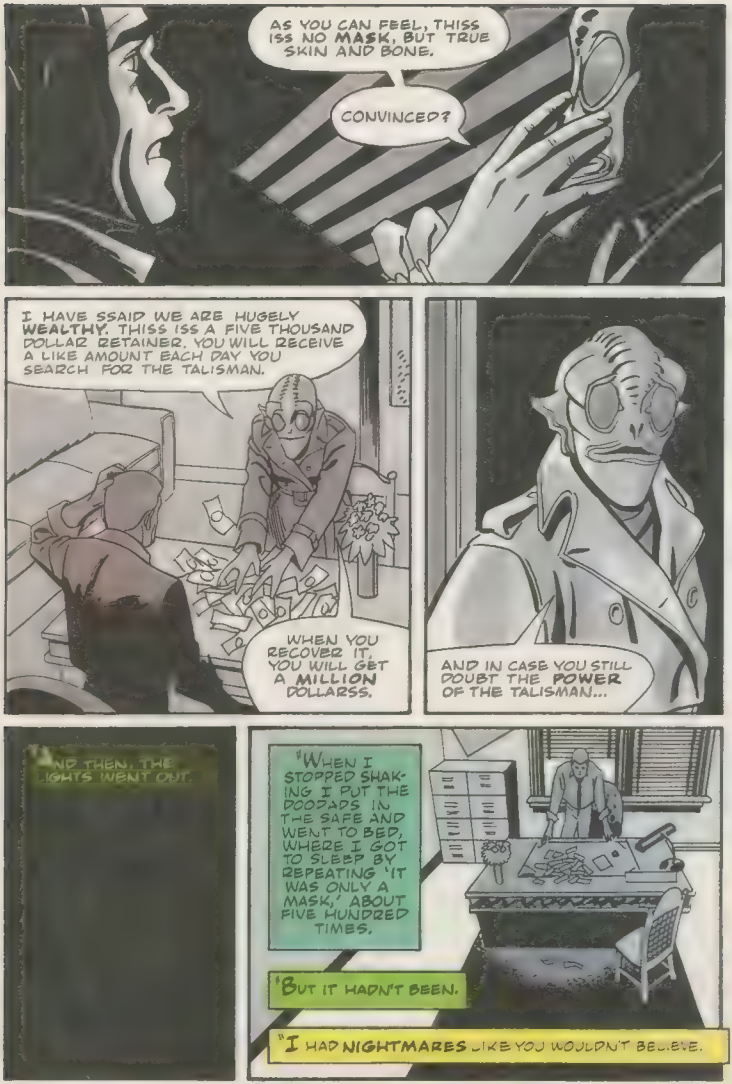

WE MONITORED YOUR PROGRESSS ON THE SSURFACE. IT WASS DETERMINED TO SSEND AN AMBASSADOR, WITH A RECORD OF ALL OUR LEARNING, TO BE GIVEN TO YOU, IF YOUR CIVILIZATION WASS WORTHY.
I AM THAT AMBASSADOR, FROM ATLANTISS!

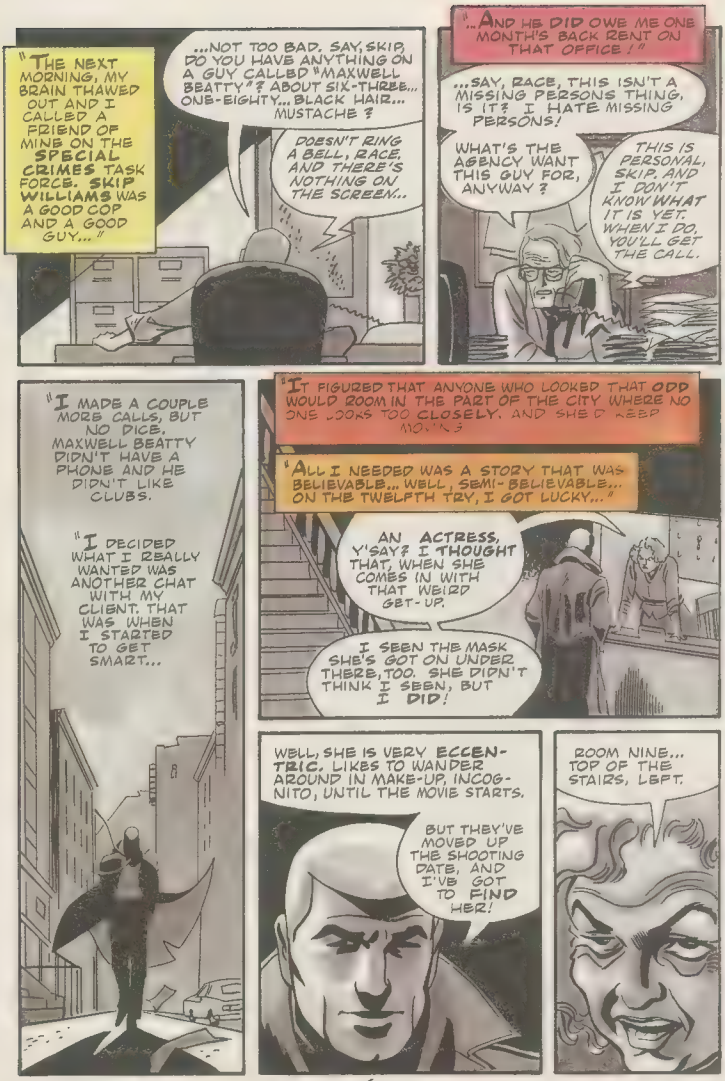

BUT I WASS TRICKED BY AN EVIL MAN, WHO BETRAYED ME AND SSTOLE MY TALISMAN OF KNOWLEDGE.
HE WILL SSELL IT TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, AND LIFE AND FREEDOM IN THE UPPER WORLD WILL END!

THISS IS THE MAN YOU MUST FIND... HE ISS CALLED, IN YOUR TONGUE, MAXWELL BEATTY. THE SPHERE IS A HARMLESS REPLICA OF THE TALISMAN.
DO THISS AND UNTOLD RICHES...

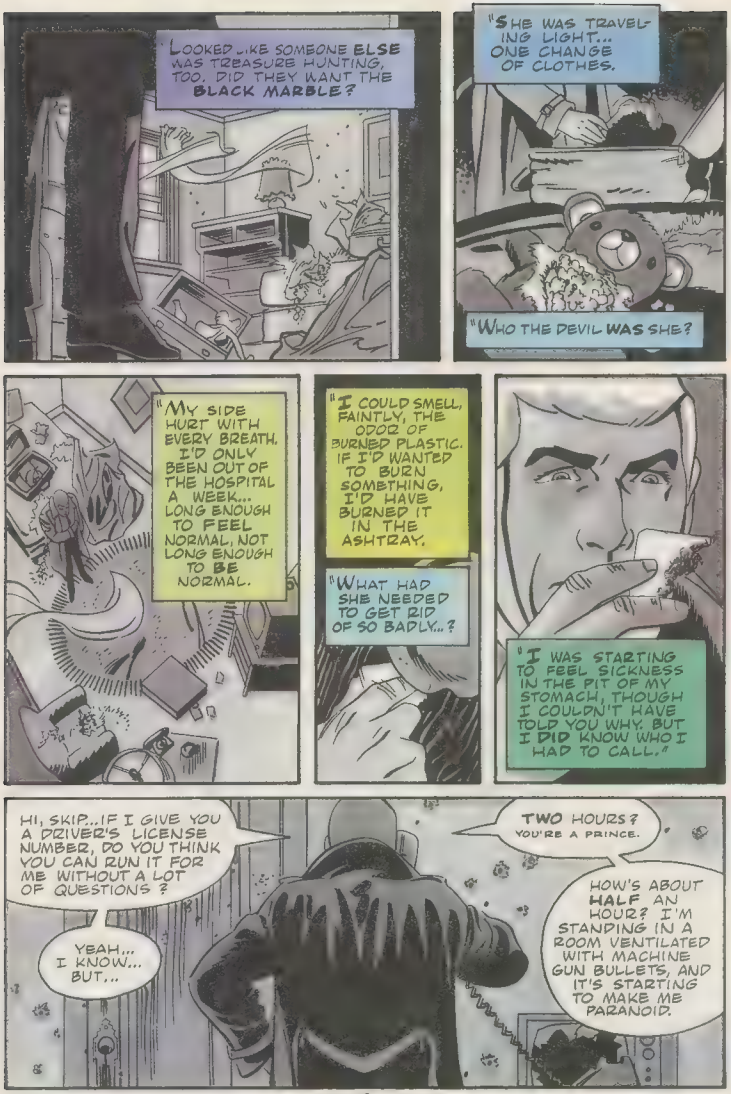

RIGHT. NOW LISTEN, SISTER...!
I REALIZE THAT THISS IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE... BUT I MUST MAKE YOU UNDERSSTAND...

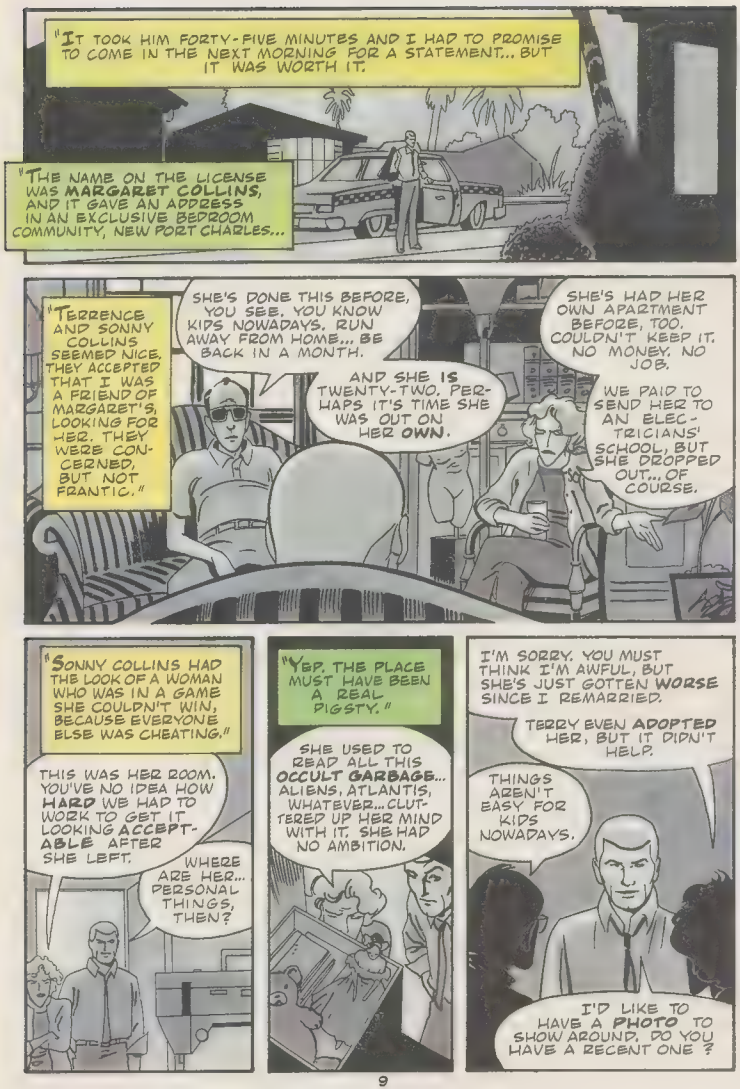
...THAT I AM NOT HUMAN!


AS YOU CAN FEEL, THISS ISS NO MASK, BUT TRUE SKIN AND BONE.
CONVINCED?
I HAVE SSAID WE ARE HUGELY WEALTHY. THISS ISS A FIVE THOUSAND DOLLAR RETAINER. YOU WILL RECEIVE A LIKE AMOUNT EACH DAY YOU SEARCH FOR THE TALISMAN.
WHEN YOU RECOVER IT, YOU WILL GET A MILLION DOLLARSS.
AND IN CASE YOU STILL DOUBT THE POWER OF THE TALISMAN...
ND THEN, THE LIGHTS WENT OUT.
"WHEN I STOPPED SHAKING I PUT THE DOODADS IN THE SAFE AND WENT TO BED, WHERE I GOT TO SLEEP BY REPEATING 'IT WAS ONLY A MASK,' ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED TIMES.
'BUT IT HADN'T BEEN.
"I HAD NIGHTMARES LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE.

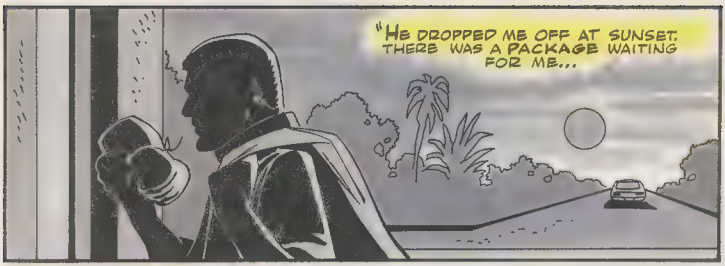

"THE NEXT MORNING, MY BRAIN THAWED OUT AND I CALLED A FRIEND OF MINE ON THE SPECIAL CRIMES TASK FORCE. SKIP WILLIAMS WAS A GOOD COP AND A GOOD GUY..."
...NOT TOO BAD, SAY, SKIP, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON A GUY CALLED "MAXWELL BEATTY"? ABOUT SIX-THREE... ONE-EIGHTY... BLACK HAIR... MUSTACHE?
DOESN'T RING A BELL, RACE, AND THERE'S NOTHING ON THE SCREEN...
"...AND HE DID OWE ME ONE MONTH'S BACK RENT ON THAT OFFICE!"
...SAY, RACE, THIS ISN'T A MISSING PERSONS THING, IS IT? I HATE MISSING PERSONS!
WHAT'S THE AGENCY WANT THIS GUY FOR, ANYWAY?
THIS IS PERSONAL, SKIP, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS YET. WHEN I DO, YOU'LL GET THE CALL.
"I MADE A COUPLE MORE CALLS, BUT NO DICE. MAXWELL BEATTY DIDN'T HAVE A PHONE AND HE DIDN'T LIKE CLUBS.
"I DECIDED WHAT I REALLY WANTED WAS ANOTHER CHAT WITH MY CLIENT. THAT WAS WHEN I STARTED TO GET SMART...
"IT FIGURED THAT ANYONE WHO LOOKED THAT ODD WOULD ROOM IN THE PART OF THE CITY WHERE NO ONE LOOKS TOO CLOSELY. AND SHE'D KEEP MOVING.
"ALL I NEEDED WAS A STORY THAT WAS BELIEVABLE... WELL, SEMI-BELIEVABLE... ON THE TWELFTH TRY, I GOT LUCKY..."
AN ACTRESS, Y'SAY? I THOUGHT THAT, WHEN SHE COMES IN WITH THAT WEIRD GET-UP.
I SEEN THE MASK SHE'S GOT ON UNDER THERE, TOO. SHE DIDN'T THINK I SEEN, BUT I DID!
WELL, SHE IS VERY ECCENTRIC. LIKES TO WANDER AROUND IN MAKE-UP, INCOGNITO, UNTIL THE MOVIE STARTS.
BUT THEY'VE MOVED UP THE SHOOTING DATE, AND I'VE GOT TO FIND HER!
ROOM NINE... TOP OF THE STAIRS, LEFT.

"THERE'S NOTHING THAT CONVINCES PEOPLE YOU'RE TRUSTWORTHY LIKE HANDING THEM A HUNDRED DOLLARS."
PRETTY BIG FOR AN ACTOR'S AGENT, AIN'T YOU?
ER... I STARTED OUT AS A STUNT MAN, AND WORKED MY WAY DOWN.
SHE BEEN HERE LONG?
'BOUT TWO, THREE DAYS.
"THREE DAYS...JUST ABOUT WHEN SHE'D HAVE HAD TO START SETTING UP LAST NIGHT'S VISIT.
"STAYING IN ONE PLACE THAT LONG WAS AMATEUR NIGHT, THOUGH. IF I COULD FIND HER...
SKKRASSH!
BBRRRAAPP!
BRRAAPP!
BBERRAAAPPP!
"SO THIS WAS AS IMPORTANT AS SHE'D SAID...I STILL COULDN'T MAKE MYSELF BELIEVE HER STORY... AND IF I DIDN'T BELIEVE HER, WHAT WAS I DOING HERE...?"
W-WAS HE AN AGENT TOO?
NAH! NOT WITH THAT TEMPER! HE WAS THE PRODUCER!


LOOKED LIKE SOMEONE ELSE WAS TREASURE HUNTING, TOO. DID THEY WANT THE BLACK MARBLE?
"SHE WAS TRAVELING LIGHT... ONE CHANGE OF CLOTHES.
"WHO THE DEVIL WAS SHE?
"MY SIDE HURT WITH EVERY BREATH. I'D ONLY BEEN OUT OF THE HOSPITAL A WEEK... LONG ENOUGH TO FEEL NORMAL, NOT LONG ENOUGH TO BE NORMAL.
"I COULD SMELL, FAINTLY, THE ODOR OF BURNED PLASTIC. IF I'D WANTED TO BURN SOMETHING, I'D HAVE BURNED IT IN THE ASHTRAY.
"WHAT HAD SHE NEEDED TO GET RID OF SO BADLY...?
"I WAS STARTING TO FEEL SICKNESS IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH, THOUGH I COULDN'T HAVE TOLD YOU WHY. BUT I DID KNOW WHO I HAD TO CALL."
HI, SKIP...IF I GIVE YOU A DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN RUN IT FOR ME WITHOUT A LOT OF QUESTIONS?
YEAH... I KNOW... BUT...
TWO HOURS? YOU'RE A PRINCE.
HOW'S ABOUT HALF AN HOUR? I'M STANDING IN A ROOM VENTILATED WITH MACHINE GUN BULLETS, AND IT'S STARTING TO MAKE ME PARANOID.


"It took him forty-five minutes and I had to promise to come in the next morning for a statement... but it was worth it.
"The name on the license was MARGARET COLLINS, and it gave an address in an exclusive bedroom community, New Port Charles...
"Terrence and Sonny Collins seemed nice. They accepted that I was a friend of Margaret's, looking for her. They were concerned, but not frantic."
She's done this before, you see. You know kids nowadays. Run away from home... be back in a month.
And she IS twenty-two. Perhaps it's time she was out on her OWN.
She's had her own apartment before, too. Couldn't keep it. No money. No job.
We paid to send her to an electricians' school, but she dropped out... of course.
"Sonny Collins had the look of a woman who was in a game she couldn't win, because everyone else was cheating."
This was her room. You've no idea how HARD we had to work to get it looking ACCEPTABLE after she left.
Where are her... personal things, then?
"Yep. The place must have been a real pigsty."
She used to read all this OCCULT GARBAGE... aliens, Atlantis, whatever... cluttered up her mind with it. She had no ambition.
I'm sorry. You must think I'm awful, but she's just gotten WORSE since I remarried.
Terry even ADOPTED her, but it didn't help.
Things aren't easy for kids nowadays.
I'd like to have a PHOTO to show around. Do you have a recent one?

THIS WAS TAKEN JUST BEFORE SHE DISAPPEARED THE LAST TIME, ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO.
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP. I'LL CALL IF I HEAR ANYTHING.
I HAVE TO GO OUT FOR SOME LIGHT BULBS. I'LL BE GLAD TO DROP YOU SOMEWHERE.
SHE'S BEEN MISSING QUITE A WHILE, HASN'T SHE? THE WHOLE SIX MONTHS SINCE THE PICTURE?
THAT WAS A SMALL UNTRUTH. I WANTED TO EXPLAIN... ABOUT SONNY.
SHE ISN'T ALWAYS THAT WAY. SHE AND MAGGIE SEEM TO BRING OUT THE WORST IN EACH OTHER.
YES. THINGS GOT WORSE AFTER SHE STARTED SEEING A MAN CALLED RANDY MIST. HE BELONGED TO SOME POLITICAL GROUP... I NEVER ASKED.
I THREW HIM OUT OF THE HOUSE, WHEN I FOUND HE WAS CARRYING A GUN. SHE WENT WITH HIM.
IS THIS HIM?
YES. I HOPE YOU CAN FIND SOME TRACE OF HER. SHE'S A GOOD KID, I THINK.
SHE SOMETIMES WOULD RUN AWAY TO GO TO HER REAL FATHER. YOU MIGHT ASK HIM.
SOUNDS GOOD. WHAT WAS HIS NAME?
MICHAELS... AL MICHAELS, I THINK HE WAS SOME KIND OF COP.



"It was another five thousand dollars. I wondered, briefly, what I was supposed to be doing for this money.

"Then I put it in the safe, ate some cold turkey, and went to bed.

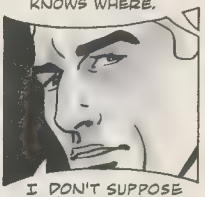
"Lt. Skip Williams wasn't exactly a barrel of **sunshine** the next morning..."

I ran a check on Margaret Collins. Parents tried to have her **committed** as an incorrigible. Shop-lifting. Vandalism.

Funny thing--her mom, Sonny, has a record, too. Stole a car once.

What about Randy Mist?

Now **there's** a sweet one. He's been in and out of trouble for years... hired muscle, dope... then he dropped out of sight about six months ago... the word is, he's moved up, but nobody knows where.



I don't suppose there's been a big black marble stolen anywhere... or something that looks like one?

Nope. You really getting back in the detective game, Race? 'Cause, if you are, the water's rough. Both these kids are tough, and you could get **hurt**.

I think the girl's my **client**... and she came to me because I'm her last stop.

One last question... the girl's real father, Al Michaels, was supposed to have been a **cop**...

I'll look into it.

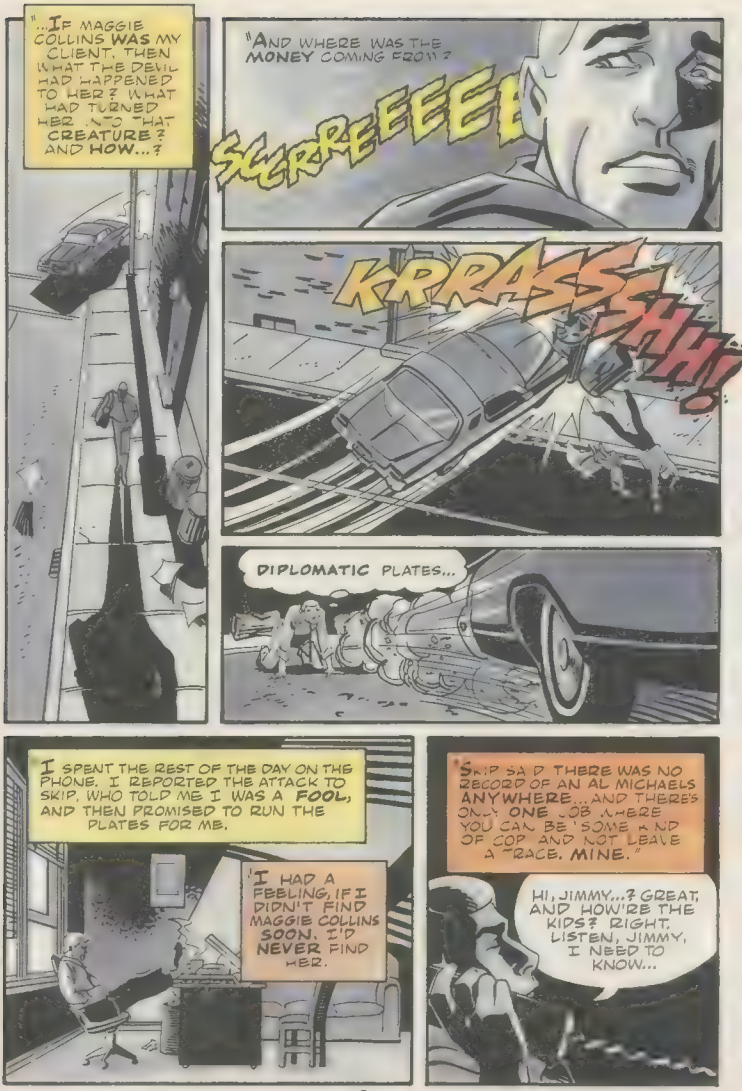
Race, that guy yesterday wasn't shooting 'cause he **liked** you...

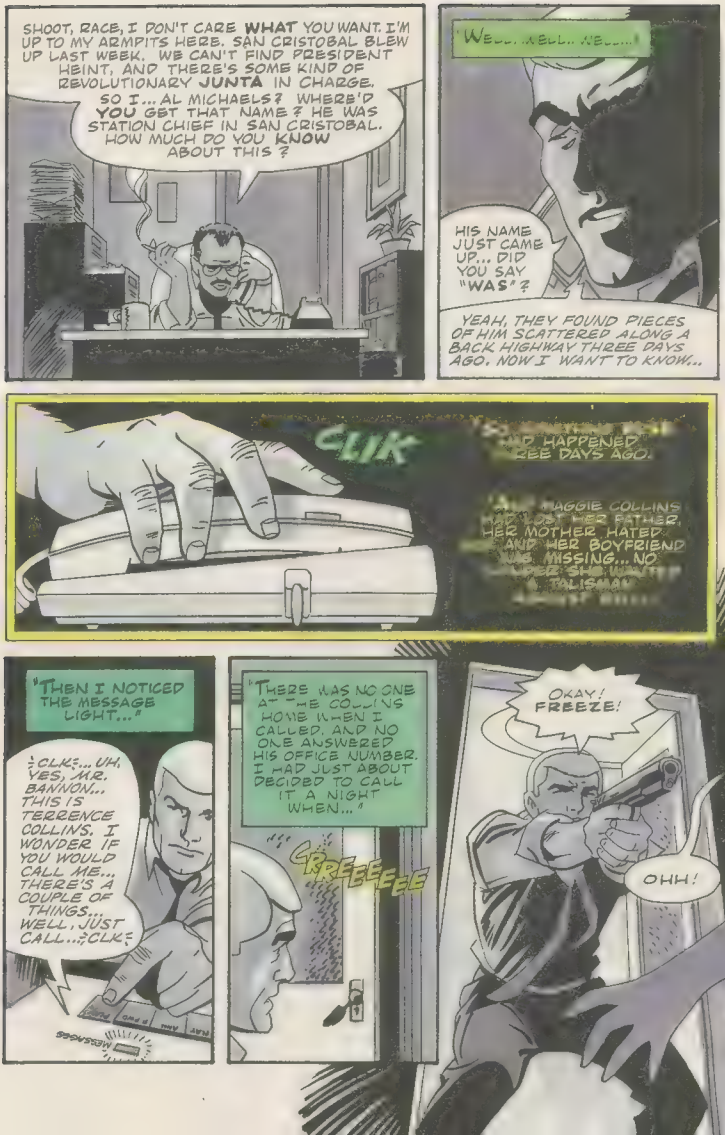
...I shouldn't tell you this, but we think your client's step-dad is laundering **mob** money.

This case is a **minefield**! Be careful!

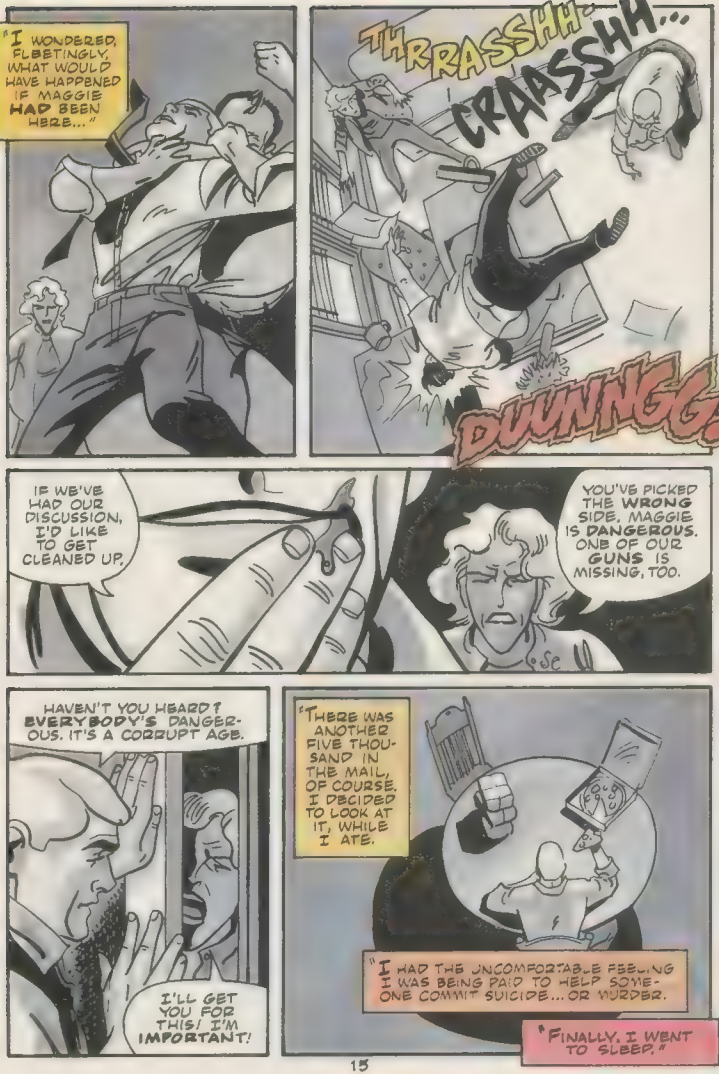
Always, Skip.

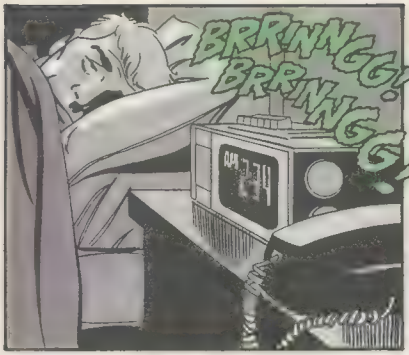
"Something bothered me more than mob connections, though...

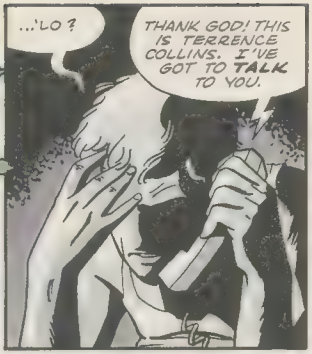

"...IF MAGGIE COLLINS WAS MY CLIENT, THEN WHAT THE DEVIL HAD HAPPENED TO HER? WHAT HAD TURNED HER INTO THAT CREATURE? AND HOW...?
"AND WHERE WAS THE MONEY COMING FROM?
SLGRREEEE
KRRASSHH!
DIPLOMATIC PLATES...
I SPENT THE REST OF THE DAY ON THE PHONE. I REPORTED THE ATTACK TO SKIP, WHO TOLD ME I WAS A FOOL, AND THEN PROMISED TO RUN THE PLATES FOR ME.
"I HAD A FEELING, IF I DIDN'T FIND MAGGIE COLLINS SOON, I'D NEVER FIND HER.
"SKIP SAID THERE WAS NO RECORD OF AN AL MICHAELS ANYWHERE...AND THERE'S ONLY ONE JOB WHERE YOU CAN BE SOME KIND OF COP AND NOT LEAVE A TRACE. MINE."
HI, JIMMY...? GREAT, AND HOW'RE THE KIDS? RIGHT. LISTEN, JIMMY, I NEED TO KNOW...

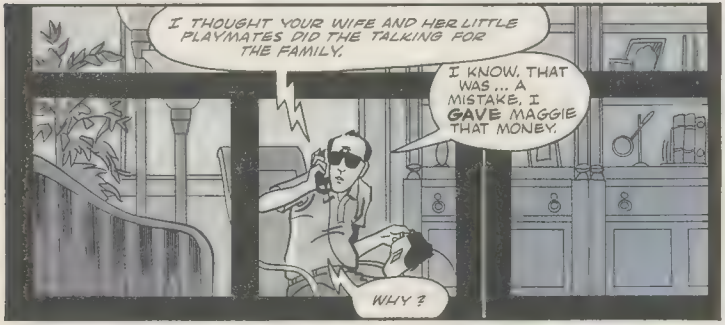

SHOOT, RACE, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU WANT. I'M UP TO MY ARMPITS HERE. SAN CRISTOBAL BLEW UP LAST WEEK. WE CAN'T FIND PRESIDENT HEINT, AND THERE'S SOME KIND OF REVOLUTIONARY JUNTA IN CHARGE.
SO I... AL MICHAELS? WHERE'D YOU GET THAT NAME? HE WAS STATION CHIEF IN SAN CRISTOBAL. HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
"WELL.. WELL.. HE....."
HIS NAME JUST CAME UP... DID YOU SAY "WAS"?
YEAH, THEY FOUND PIECES OF HIM SCATTERED ALONG A BACK HIGHWAY THREE DAYS AGO. NOW I WANT TO KNOW...
CLIK
...ND HAPPENED ...REE DAYS AGO.
...AGGIE COLLINS ...LOST HER FATHER, HER MOTHER HATED ...AND HER BOYFRIEND ...MISSING... NO ...SHE WANTED ...TALISMAN
"THEN I NOTICED THE MESSAGE LIGHT..."
:CLIK:... UH, YES, MR. BANNON... THIS IS TERRENCE COLLINS. I WONDER IF YOU WOULD CALL ME... THERE'S A COUPLE OF THINGS... WELL, JUST CALL...:CLIK:
MESSAGES
"THERE WAS NO ONE AT THE COLLINS HOME WHEN I CALLED. AND NO ONE ANSWERED HIS OFFICE NUMBER. I HAD JUST ABOUT DECIDED TO CALL IT A NIGHT WHEN..."
"CRREEEEEE
OKAY! FREEZE!
OHH!

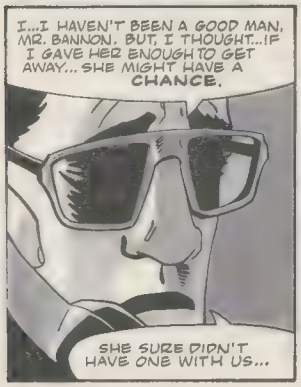
SORRY--SOMEONE TRIED TO KILL ME TODAY. I'M EDGY.
I'M HERE FOR MY DAUGHTER, MR. BANNON. DON'T TRY TO TELL ME YOU'RE NOT HIDING HER.
PRIVATE
I'M NOT HIDING HER.
MY DAUGHTER HATES ME, AND WANTS TO DESTROY ME. TODAY I DISCOVERED WE'RE MISSING ALMOST FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS OF OUR SAVINGS.
I THINK MY DAUGHTER IS BLACKMAILING MY HUSBAND, SO I WANT TO FIND HER.
AND I BROUGHT A COUPLE OF MY HUSBAND'S "ASSOCIATES" TO HELP CONVINCE YOU TO TELL ME.
NOW, ARE YOU GOING TO BE SMART...?
"THE THING I'VE ALWAYS LIKED ABOUT STRAIGHT-OUT CONFRONTATIONS...
"...AT LEAST THEY GIVE YOU A TARGET.
THUDD!

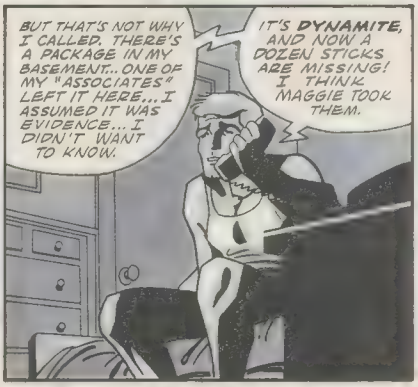

"I WONDERED, FLEETINGLY, WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF MAGGIE HAD BEEN HERE..."
THRRASSHH-
CRAASSHH...
DUNNGG!
IF WE'VE HAD OUR DISCUSSION, I'D LIKE TO GET CLEANED UP.
YOU'VE PICKED THE WRONG SIDE, MAGGIE. IS DANGEROUS. ONE OF OUR GUNS IS MISSING, TOO.
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? EVERYBODY'S DANGEROUS. IT'S A CORRUPT AGE.
I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS! I'M IMPORTANT!
"THERE WAS ANOTHER FIVE THOUSAND IN THE MAIL, OF COURSE. I DECIDED TO LOOK AT IT, WHILE I ATE.
"I HAD THE UNCOMFORTABLE FEELING I WAS BEING PAID TO HELP SOMEONE COMMIT SUICIDE... OR MURDER.
"FINALLY, I WENT TO SLEEP."

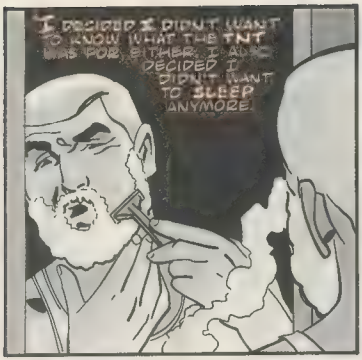

BRRINGG!
BRRINGG!

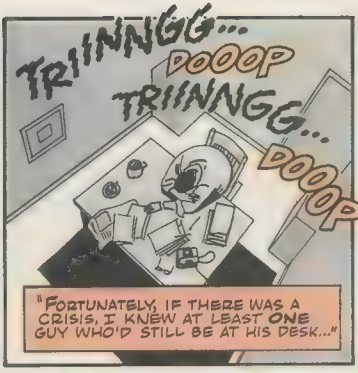

...'LO ?
THANK GOD! THIS IS TERRENCE COLLINS. I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU.

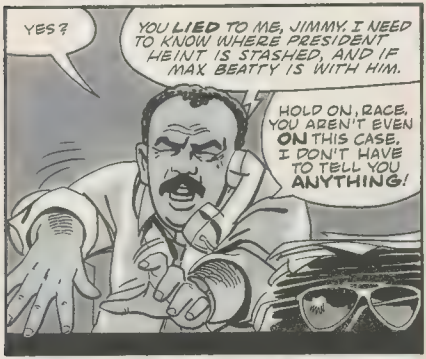

I THOUGHT YOUR WIFE AND HER LITTLE PLAYMATES DID THE TALKING FOR THE FAMILY.
I KNOW. THAT WAS ... A MISTAKE. I GAVE MAGGIE THAT MONEY.
WHY ?

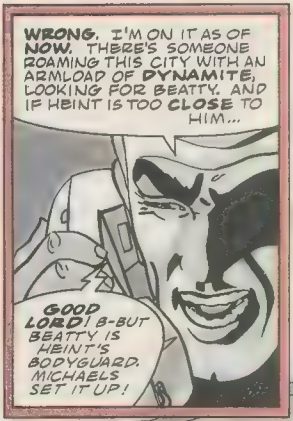

I...I HAVEN'T BEEN A GOOD MAN, MR. BANNON. BUT, I THOUGHT...IF I GAVE HER ENOUGH TO GET AWAY... SHE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE.
SHE SURE DIDN'T HAVE ONE WITH US...

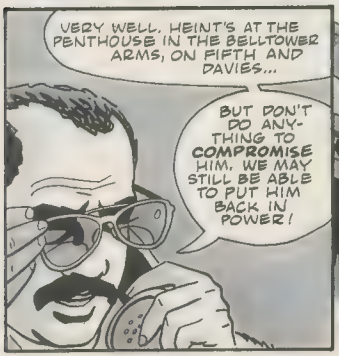

BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I CALLED. THERE'S A PACKAGE IN MY BASEMENT... ONE OF MY "ASSOCIATES" LEFT IT HERE,... I ASSUMED IT WAS EVIDENCE... I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW.
IT'S DYNAMITE, AND NOW A DOZEN STICKS ARE MISSING! I THINK MAGGIE TOOK THEM.

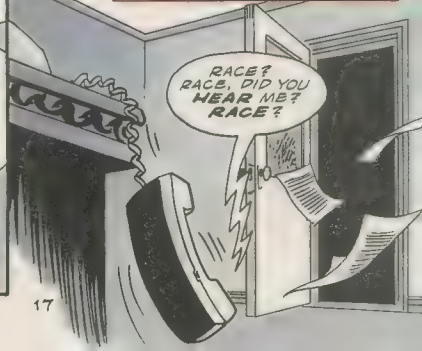

I DECIDED I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE TNT WAS FOR, EITHER. I ALSO DECIDED I DIDN'T WANT TO SLEEP ANYMORE.

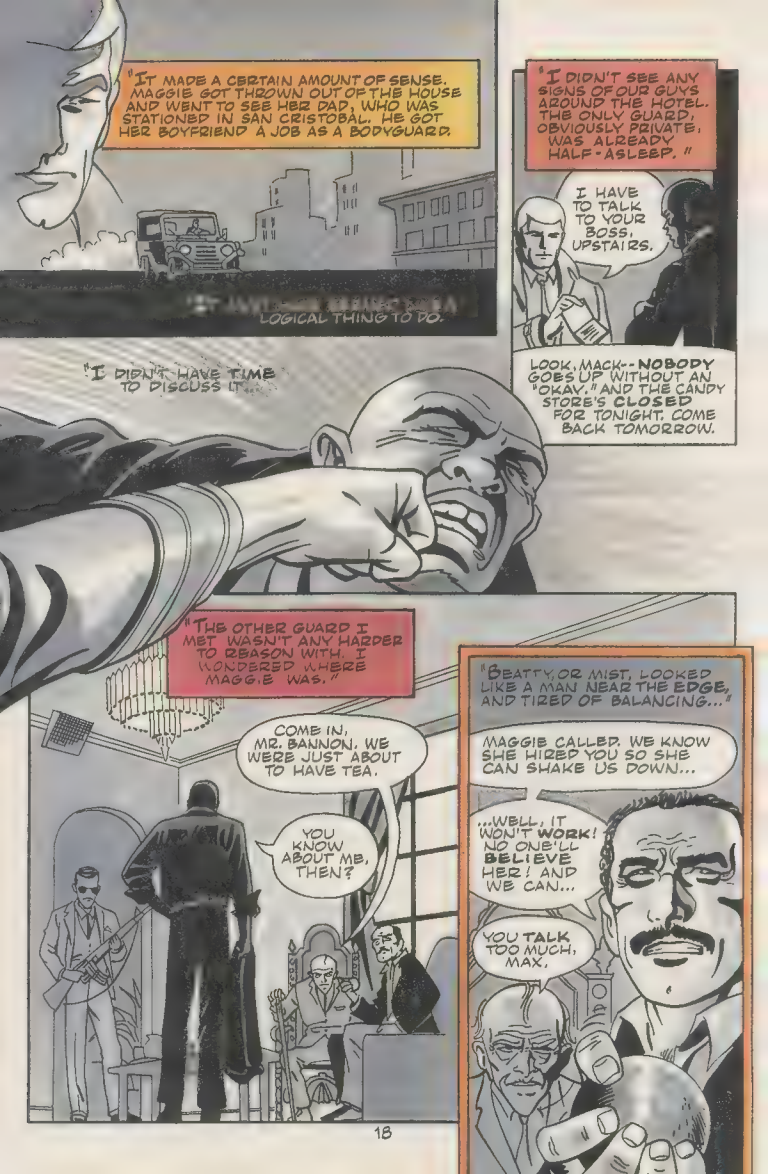

TRIINNGG...
DOOOP
TRIINNGG...
DOOOP
"FORTUNATELY, IF THERE WAS A CRISIS, I KNEW AT LEAST ONE GUY WHO'D STILL BE AT HIS DESK..."


YES?
YOU LIED TO ME, JIMMY. I NEED TO KNOW WHERE PRESIDENT HEINT IS STASHED, AND IF MAX BEATTY IS WITH HIM.
HOLD ON, RACE, YOU AREN'T EVEN ON THIS CASE. I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU ANYTHING!


WRONG. I'M ON IT AS OF NOW. THERE'S SOMEONE ROAMING THIS CITY WITH AN ARMLOAD OF DYNAMITE, LOOKING FOR BEATTY. AND IF HEINT IS TOO CLOSE TO HIM...
GOOD LORD! B-BUT BEATTY IS HEINT'S BODYGUARD. MICHAELS SET IT UP!


VERY WELL. HEINT'S AT THE PENTHOUSE IN THE BELLTOWER ARMS, ON FIFTH AND DAVIES...
BUT DON'T DO ANYTHING TO COMPROMISE HIM. WE MAY STILL BE ABLE TO PUT HIM BACK IN POWER!

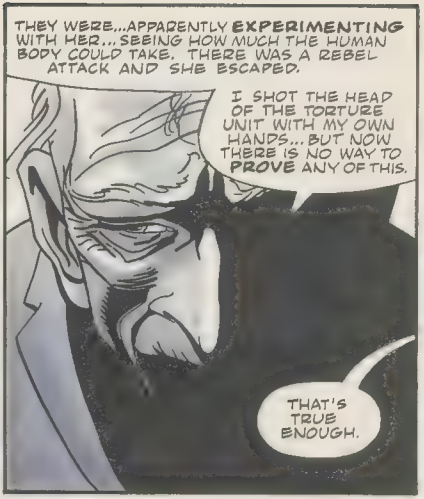

RACE? RACE, DID YOU HEAR ME? RACE?

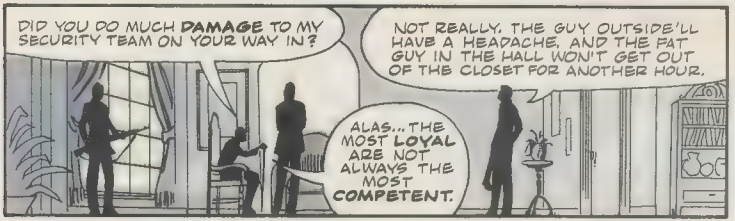

"IT MADE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SENSE. MAGGIE GOT THROWN OUT OF THE HOUSE AND WENT TO SEE HER DAD, WHO WAS STATIONED IN SAN CRISTOBAL. HE GOT HER BOYFRIEND A JOB AS A BODYGUARD.
LOGICAL THING TO DO.
"I DIDN'T SEE ANY SIGNS OF OUR GUYS AROUND THE HOTEL. THE ONLY GUARD, OBVIOUSLY PRIVATE, WAS ALREADY HALF-ASLEEP."
I HAVE TO TALK TO YOUR BOSS, UPSTAIRS.
LOOK, MACK--NOBODY GOES UP WITHOUT AN "OKAY," AND THE CANDY STORE'S CLOSED FOR TONIGHT. COME BACK TOMORROW.
"I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO DISCUSS IT."
"THE OTHER GUARD I MET WASN'T ANY HARDER TO REASON WITH. I WONDERED WHERE MAGGIE WAS."
COME IN, MR. BANNON. WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO HAVE TEA.
YOU KNOW ABOUT ME, THEN?
"BEATTY, OR MIST, LOOKED LIKE A MAN NEAR THE EDGE, AND TIRED OF BALANCING..."
MAGGIE CALLED. WE KNOW SHE HIRED YOU SO SHE CAN SHAKE US DOWN...
...WELL, IT WON'T WORK! NO ONE'LL BELIEVE HER! AND WE CAN...
YOU TALK TOO MUCH, MAX.

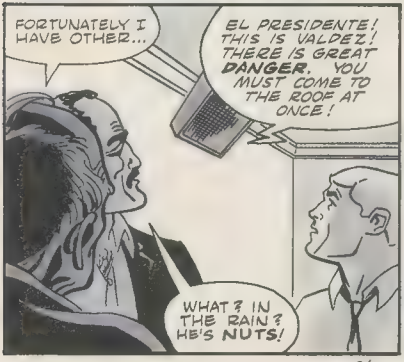
"I WONDERED WHAT WAS WRONG WITH HEINT. THE HEART, MAYBE... OR THE KIDNEYS? OR MAYBE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE SOUL..."
WE ARE ALL UNDER STRESS... LIFE WAS SO MUCH EASIER WHEN I TAUGHT AT THE UNIVERSITY... I AM NOT WELL CONSTRUCTED FOR POLITICS.
I THINK MAGGIE COLLINS IS COMING TO KILL YOU.
LET HER COME! I'M NOT GOIN' BACK TO SAN CRISTOBAL TO FACE A FIRING SQUAD!
DID YOU HAVE HER FATHER KILLED?
IT WAS DONE ON MY WATCH... BUT NOT BY MY ORDER.
AL MICHAELS MADE THREATS... SO DID I. MINE WERE CARRIED OUT.
I REGRETTED IT, LATER.
I TRIED TO EXPLAIN THIS TO MISS COLLINS. HER FATHER HAD DISCOVERED CERTAIN... UM... PRACTICES OF MY REPUBLIC... CERTAIN WAYS OF EXTRACTING INFORMATION... WHICH I DID NOT ALWAYS APPROVE OF.
I WAS, IN A SENSE, A PRISONER OF MY GENERALS.
BUT WHEN MR. MICHAELS PREPARED A REPORT, I KNEW THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WOULD MISUNDERSTAND MY MOTIVES.
REGRETFULLY, I SENT ORDERS THAT HE BE DETAINED. INSTEAD HE WAS KILLED.
MISS COLLINS HAS IN HER POSSESSION CERTAIN PHOTOGRAPHS WHICH, IF MADE PUBLIC, WOULD MAKE IMPOSSIBLE MY ASYLUM HERE. CAN YOU WONDER I WOULD LIKE THEM BACK?
THEN YOU'RE THE ONES WHO KEPT COMING AT ME?

YEAH, ONCE I SAW YOU AT HER ROOMING HOUSE, I FIGURED YOU TWO WERE WORKING TOGETHER.
YOU LOOK NERVOUS. DO YOU ALWAYS MASSAGE THAT BLACK BALL LIKE THAT ?
YEAH, IT'S A HANDBALL. I USE IT TO STRENGTHEN MY GRIP... HEY!
SORRY, BUT IT'S ALSO A "TALISMAN OF POWER." BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
"I HAD DECIDED THAT MAGGIE'S WHOLE STORY HAD BEEN FANTASY, BUT NOW I KNEW IT WAS TRUTH, COPED IN A WAY SHE COULD STAND IT."
SHE PROBABLY DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TIME... SHE HAD TO HIDE THE STUFF SOMEWHERE SAFE... SOMEWHERE YOU'D NEVER LOOK...
AND THERE IT IS! FILM OF INCRIMINATING DOCUMENTS, I'D GUESS.
AREN'T YOU AFRAID WE'LL SIMPLY "BUMP YOU OFF" AND TAKE THAT ?
NOT VERY. YOU JUST TOLD ME WHAT A NICE GUY YOU ARE.
BESIDES, BEFORE I LEFT HERE, I TOLD LT. SKIP WILLIAMS WHERE I WAS GOING. YOU CAN'T AFFORD FOR ME TO BE MISSING.
VERY TRUE. YOU ARE A PERCEPTIVE MAN, MR. BANNON.
JUST A CURIOUS MAN.
WHAT HAPPENED TO MAGGIE COLLINS BACK THERE ? SHE LOOKS... DEFORMED.
IT WAS THAT WHICH CONVINCED ME I WAS A MERE FIGUREHEAD.
SHE WAS TAKEN BY THE SECRET POLICE WHEN HER FATHER WAS KILLED. I ORDERED HER RELEASED. THEY LAUGHED AT ME.

THERE IS... A DRUG, WHICH CAUSES THE MUSCLES AND NERVES TO CONVULSE. IN SMALL DOSES, IT IS AN HALLUCINOGEN... IN LARGE DOSES, IT CAUSES DEFORMITY AND DEATH.
MY SECRET POLICE WERE USING IT TO EXTRACT CONFESSIONS...

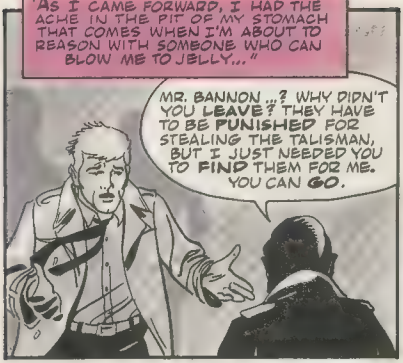

THEY WERE... APPARENTLY **EXPERIMENTING** WITH HER... SEEING HOW MUCH THE HUMAN BODY COULD TAKE. THERE WAS A REBEL ATTACK AND SHE ESCAPED.
I SHOT THE HEAD OF THE TORTURE UNIT WITH MY OWN HANDS... BUT NOW THERE IS NO WAY TO **PROVE** ANY OF THIS.
THAT'S TRUE ENOUGH.

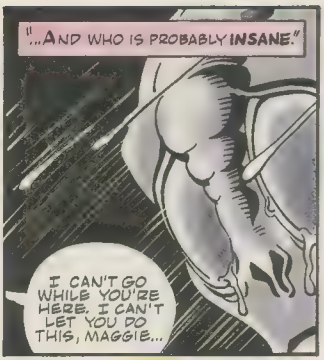

DID YOU DO MUCH **DAMAGE** TO MY SECURITY TEAM ON YOUR WAY IN?
NOT REALLY. THE GUY OUTSIDE'LL HAVE A HEADACHE, AND THE FAT GUY IN THE HALL WON'T GET OUT OF THE CLOSET FOR ANOTHER HOUR.
ALAS... THE MOST **LOYAL** ARE NOT ALWAYS THE MOST **COMPETENT.**

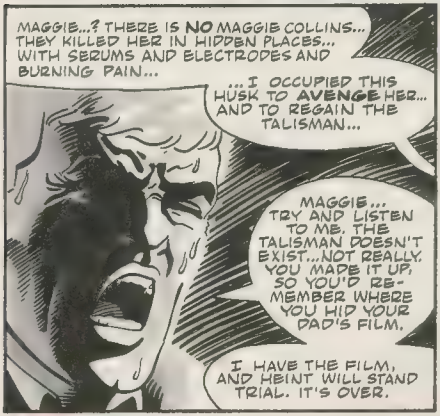

FORTUNATELY I HAVE OTHER...
EL PRESIDENTE! THIS IS VALDEZ! THERE IS GREAT **DANGER.** YOU MUST COME TO THE ROOF AT ONCE!
WHAT? IN THE RAIN? HE'S **NUTS!**

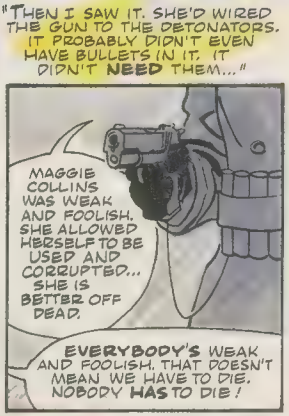
PERHAPS NOT. VALDEZ IS NOT GIVEN TO HYSTERIA. PERHAPS THERE **IS** A THREAT.
GENTLEMEN, SHALL WE GO TO THE ROOF?

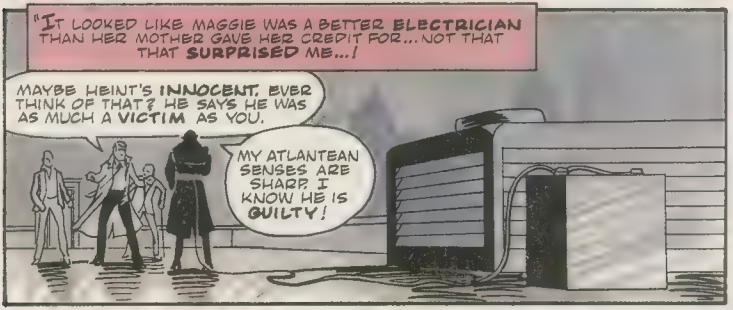
"THERE WAS PART OF ME THAT KNEW WHAT WE'D FIND ON THE ROOF. I JUST DIDN'T KNOW HOW BAD IT WOULD BE..."
VALDEZ! WHAT IS THE PROBLEM...?
PLEASE, EL PRESIDENTE, THROW YOUR GUNS OVER THE EDGE OF THE ROOF. PLEASE, DO NOT SHOOT...
"I COUNTED TWELVE STICKS OF PRIME TNT. AT THIS RANGE IT WOULD TAKE HER, US, AND ABOUT HALF THE TOP FLOOR TO GLORY.
"I HOPED THE GUYS WITH THE GUNS KNEW THAT, TOO..."
YOU MAY SHOOT IF YOU WISH. BUT IT WILL ONLY HASTEN YOUR DESTRUCTION. DO NOT BE FOOLISH.
"...THEY DID."
YOU MAY LOOK UPON MY TRUE FACE. THE HONOR OF ATLANTIS REQUIRES THAT YOU DIE FOR YOUR CRIMES...
WAIT! WAIT, YOU COWARDS! SHE WON'T DO ANYTHING WHILE YOU'RE HERE! WAIT!
BUT ONLY THE WORST SHOULD DIE. ALL BUT BEATTY AND HEINT GET OUT... RUN! QUICK!


"As I came forward, I had the ache in the pit of my stomach that comes when I'm about to reason with someone who can blow me to jelly..."
MR. BANNON ...? WHY DIDN'T YOU LEAVE? THEY HAVE TO BE PUNISHED FOR STEALING THE TALISMAN, BUT I JUST NEEDED YOU TO FIND THEM FOR ME. YOU CAN GO.

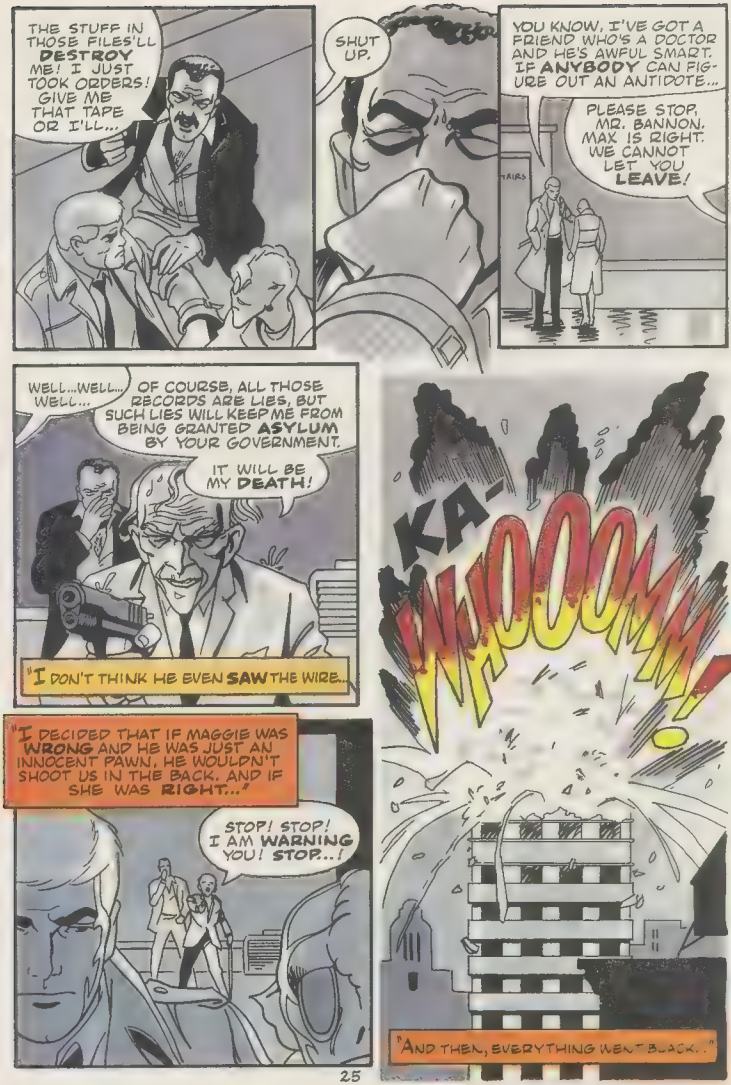

"...And who is probably INSANE."
I CAN'T GO WHILE YOU'RE HERE. I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS, MAGGIE...

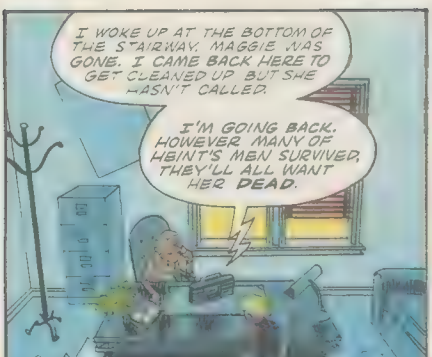

MAGGIE...? THERE IS NO MAGGIE COLLINS... THEY KILLED HER IN HIDDEN PLACES... WITH SERUMS AND ELECTRODES AND BURNING PAIN...
...I OCCUPIED THIS HUSK TO AVENGE HER... AND TO REGAIN THE TALISMAN...
MAGGIE... TRY AND LISTEN TO ME. THE TALISMAN DOESN'T EXIST... NOT REALLY. YOU MADE IT UP, SO YOU'D REMEMBER WHERE YOU HID YOUR DAD'S FILM.
I HAVE THE FILM, AND HEINT WILL STAND TRIAL. IT'S OVER.


"Then I saw it. She'd wired the gun to the detonators. It probably didn't even have bullets in it. It didn't NEED them..."
MAGGIE COLLINS WAS WEAK AND FOOLISH. SHE ALLOWED HERSELF TO BE USED AND CORRUPTED... SHE IS BETTER OFF DEAD.
EVERYBODY'S WEAK AND FOOLISH. THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE HAVE TO DIE. NOBODY HAS TO DIE!


"It looked like Maggie was a better ELECTRICIAN than her mother gave her credit for... not that that SURPRISED me...!
MAYBE HEINT'S INNOCENT. EVER THINK OF THAT? HE SAYS HE WAS AS MUCH A VICTIM AS YOU.
MY ATLANTEAN SENSES ARE SHARP. I KNOW HE IS GUILTY!

"SHE HAD STOPPED LISPING. I HOPED THAT WAS A GOOD SIGN..."
KID, THE BOTTOM LINE IS, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IT WITH ME STANDING HERE. AND I DON'T THINK YOU WILL.
YOU'RE NO MURDERER. YOU DIDN'T WANT TO KILL THOSE GUARDS, AND YOU DON'T WANT TO KILL ME... AND I DON'T THINK YOU WANT TO KILL MAGGIE COLLINS EITHER, NOT REALLY.
BUT I AM ATLANTEAN...
KLUNK!
FLOFF-SLURCH!
COME ON, KID. LET'S GET SOME-PLACE WARM.
STAIRS
HEY! YOU CAN'T JUST WALK OUT! MAGGIE, PLEASE!

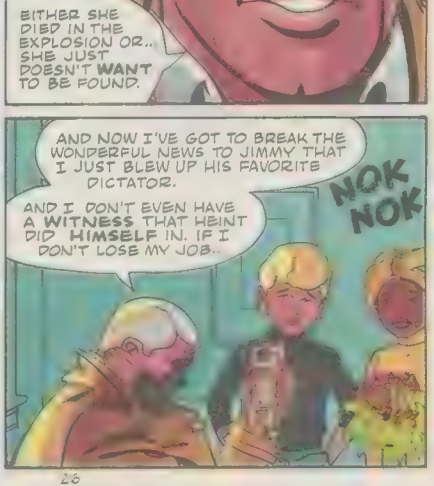

THE STUFF IN THOSE FILES'LL DESTROY ME! I JUST TOOK ORDERS! GIVE ME THAT TAPE OR I'LL...
SHUT UP.
YOU KNOW, I'VE GOT A FRIEND WHO'S A DOCTOR AND HE'S AWFUL SMART. IF ANYBODY CAN FIGURE OUT AN ANTIDOTE...
PLEASE STOP, MR. BANNON. MAX IS RIGHT. WE CANNOT LET YOU LEAVE!
WELL...WELL... WELL...
OF COURSE, ALL THOSE RECORDS ARE LIES, BUT SUCH LIES WILL KEEP ME FROM BEING GRANTED ASYLUM BY YOUR GOVERNMENT.
IT WILL BE MY DEATH!
"I DON'T THINK HE EVEN SAW THE WIRE...
KA-
WHOOOM!
"I DECIDED THAT IF MAGGIE WAS WRONG AND HE WAS JUST AN INNOCENT PAWN, HE WOULDN'T SHOOT US IN THE BACK. AND IF SHE WAS RIGHT..."
STOP! STOP! I AM WARNING YOU! STOP...!
"AND THEN, EVERYTHING WENT BLACK..."


I WOKE UP AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRWAY. MAGGIE WAS GONE. I CAME BACK HERE TO GET CLEANED UP BUT SHE HASN'T CALLED.
I'M GOING BACK. HOWEVER MANY OF HEINT'S MEN SURVIVED, THEY'LL ALL WANT HER DEAD.

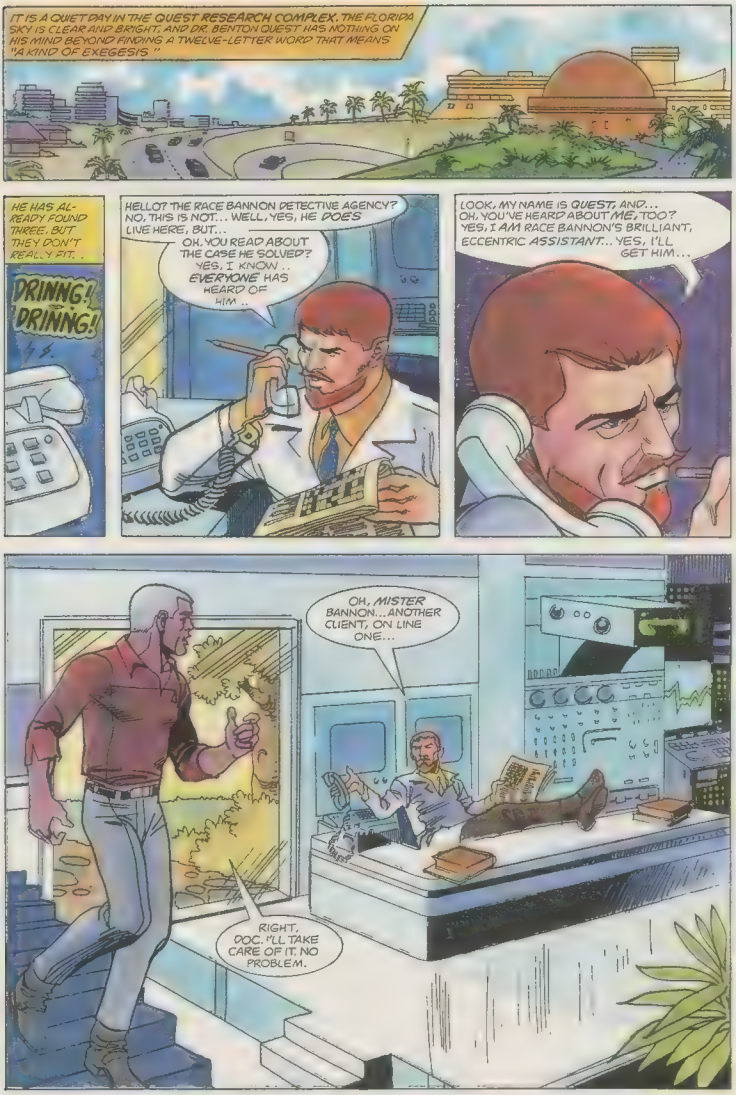
...AND SHE'S STILL MY CLIENT AND I PROMISED TO HELP HER. I GUESS THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE...
SKREEEK
JONNY! LOOK...!

JONNY! HADJ!! BUT... HOW?
DAD HAD TO STAY ON THE ISLAND FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS. HE SENT US HOME EARLY.
DID YOU FIND HER?

OH, YOU HEARD...? NO. THERE'S NO TRACE.
EITHER SHE DIED IN THE EXPLOSION OR.. SHE JUST DOESN'T WANT TO BE FOUND.


AND NOW I'VE GOT TO BREAK THE WONDERFUL NEWS TO JIMMY THAT I JUST BLEW UP HIS FAVORITE DICTATOR.
AND I DON'T EVEN HAVE A WITNESS THAT HEINT DID HIMSELF IN. IF I DON'T LOSE MY JOB..
NOK NOK

HELLO. I'M LOOKING FOR A DETECTIVE...?
I'M A DETECTIVE. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I...I THINK I NEED A FRIEND. COULD YOU FIND ME ONE?
DOESN'T SOUND TOO TOUGH. THERE'S A LOT OF THEM AROUND.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, MISS?
MAGGIE... MY NAME IS MAGGIE COLLINS...!
END


IT IS A QUIET DAY IN THE QUEST RESEARCH COMPLEX. THE FLORIDA SKY IS CLEAR AND BRIGHT. AND DR. BENTON QUEST HAS NOTHING ON HIS MIND BEYOND FINDING A TWELVE-LETTER WORD THAT MEANS "A KIND OF EXEGESIS."
HE HAS ALREADY FOUND THREE. BUT THEY DON'T REALLY FIT. .
DRRING! DRRING!
HELLO? THE RACE BANNON DETECTIVE AGENCY? NO, THIS IS NOT... WELL, YES, HE DOES LIVE HERE, BUT...
OH, YOU READ ABOUT THE CASE HE SOLVED? YES, I KNOW. . EVERYONE HAS HEARD OF HIM ..
LOOK, MY NAME IS QUEST, AND... OH, YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT ME, TOO? YES, I AM RACE BANNON'S BRILLIANT, ECCENTRIC ASSISTANT... YES, I'LL GET HIM...
OH, MISTER BANNON... ANOTHER CLIENT, ON LINE ONE...
RIGHT, DOC. I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT. NO PROBLEM.

AH... YES, ACTUALLY THE DETECTIVE BUSINESS HAS BEEN PUT ON HOLD... THAT'S RIGHT. I'M DOING MOSTLY BODYGUARD WORK NOW.
YES, WELL... IF I EVER NEED A JOB FINDING LOST CATS, I'LL KEEP YOU IN MIND. MMHMM. 'BYE.
YOUR "ASSISTANT," RACE?
YEAH, HEH... SORRY ABOUT THAT. THE NEWSPAPER GUY MUST'VE MISUNDERSTOOD... ER...
ARE YOU MAD, DOC?
NO, NOT MAD. JUST A LITTLE FRUSTRATED.
HOW'S YOUR FRIEND?
MAGGIE'S DOING BETTER. THEY SAY SHE CAN LEAVE THE CLINIC NEXT WEEK. I APPRECIATE ALL YOU DID FOR HER.
DON'T MENTION IT. BUT COULD YOU ASK FIRST BEFORE YOU TURN MY HOUSE INTO A THREE-RING CIRCUS?
SURE, DOC. OOPS.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS MY HOUSE

RACE, WAIT A SECOND! I DIDN'T MEAN...
BLAST!
WHAT'S THIS?
Dear Dad,
Hadji and I have gone to see Dr Dharma, so we can learn the secrets of the universe. Back for supper.
Jonny
DR DHARMA?

GOSH, HARJI. DO YOU THINK DR. DHARMA IS A REAL HOLY MAN?
OH, YES, JONNY. IN MY COUNTRY HE IS MOST FAMOUS. IT IS VERY LUCKY FOR ME THAT HE IS HERE. I HAVE WAITED A LONG TIME TO FIND A REAL MYSTIC TEACHER!
I THOUGHT YOU KNEW ALL THAT STUFF, DON'T YOU?
OH, NO! I ONLY KNOW A FEW MIND TRICKS! A TRUE TEACHER WILL PUT ME ON THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT AND HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS!
DO YOU THINK HE'LL MIND THAT I'M WITH YOU? I MEAN, I'M NOT INDIAN AND I HAVEN'T STUDIED OR ANYTHING...
OH, NO! DO NOT WORRY. ALL YOGIS ARE BEYOND SUCH PETTINESS. THEY ARE ENLIGHTENED AND JOYFUL, OPEN AND FILLED WITH BUOYANT INNER PEACE

LESSON ONE
WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS
STORY
ERNIE COLON
ARTWORK
BOB PINAHA
LETTERS
KATHRYN MAYER
COLORS
ROOMS FOR RENT
AN' YOU STAY OUTTA HERE, DHARMA, TILL YOU PAY YER RENT! I DON'T RENT TO CROOKS, CONS, OR DEADBEATS!
DIANA SCHUTZ
REPORT CARD

A THOUSAND PARDONS, TEACHER. IF YOU ARE DR DHARMA, I WILL SIT AT YOUR FEET AND LEARN.
YES. WE WANT TO BE YOUR STUDENTS
ROOMS FOR RENT
I ALREADY KNOW SOMETHING OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, BUT I NEED A REAL TEACHER. SOMEONE AS WISE AS YOU.
HADJI'S REAL GOOD, TOO. AND WE'LL BOTH WORK REAL HARD. MAYBE WE COULD BE YOUR STUDENTS PART-TIME...?
TEACH YOU? PART-TIME? GOODNESS GRACIOUS ME NO I WOULD RATHER BE FLOGGED BY SCORPIONS THAN TO TEACH YOU! I WOULD PREFER TO BE DRAGGED THROUGH POISON THORN BUSHES THAN TO TEACH YOU!
I DO NOT TEACH STUDENTS! THEY ARE TROUBLESOME AND SILLY AND EVEN IF I DID TAKE STUDENTS I WOULD NOT TAKE YOU
PART-TIME, INDEED?!
SOMETIMES HOLY MEN GET A LITTLE TESTY.

WE CAN WORK FULL-TIME, TOO! HONEST!
YES, AND WE CAN BE A HELP TO YOU! WE WILL TRY VERY HARD, IF ONLY YOU WILL...
YOU WILL TRY! YOU WILL WORK! YOU WILL HELP!
THE ONLY HELP I NEED IS TO BE LEFT ALONE!
WHEN I WAS A VERY YOUNG MAN, GOODNESS ME, I WENT TO VISIT A WISE MAN WHO LIVED ON A MOUNTAINTOP!
IT TOOK ME A DAY TO CLIMB UP TO HIM, AND WHEN I ARRIVED HE SAID, "STUPID ONE, YOU ARE IN MY LIGHT...GO AWAY!"
I CRIED AND I PLEADED TO BE HIS STUDENT, BUT HE WAS UNMOVED. AT LAST HE SAID, "IF YOU WERE IN TRUTH SINCERE, YOU WOULD THROW YOURSELF OFF THE MOUNTAIN, SECURE THAT I WOULD STOP YOUR FALL."
SO I THREW MYSELF OFF THE MOUNTAIN...
AND WAS KILLED
THEN, THE WISE MAN WENT DOWN THE MOUNTAIN, PUT ME BACK TOGETHER, AND ACCEPTED ME AS HIS STUDENT BECAUSE I HAD PROVEN MY SINCERITY.
BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT YOU...
DR SHARMA
SCREEEE!
BEEP! BEEP!
LOOK OUT!

ARE YOU BUSY, RACE? I'D LIKE TO TALK...
SURE, BUT I'D LIKE TO KEEP WORKING. I PROMISED TO REPAIR THE GYRO IN THIS THING--SORT OF EARN MY KEEP...
I GUESS I DESERVED THAT
LOOK, RACE, THIS IS YOUR PLACE, TOO. YOU KNOW THAT
THE AGENCY PAYS YOU TO BE A BODYGUARD TO US WHEN WE HAVE RISKY ASSIGNMENTS, BUT YOU'RE MY FRIEND, NOT MY EMPLOYEE, AND IF I ACT IN A WAY THAT GIVES YOU THAT IMPRESSION... WELL, I'M A DOPE, I GUESS.
THIS ISN'T AN EXCUSE, BUT... THIS IS THE FIRST PLACE I COULD CALL MY OWN
I WENT FROM MY FOLKS' HOUSE, TO THE UNIVERSITY, TO GOVERNMENT LABS AND PLACES THAT JUDY BOUGHT FOR ME...BEFORE SHE DIED. THIS PLACE I CREATED ON MY OWN. IT SAYS "QUEST RESEARCH" ON THE DOOR... AND I GET TERRITORIAL. I'M SORRY
CAN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING, RACE? I'VE APOLOGIZED. I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO SAY...
WELL, YOU COULD . SAY THE SECRET WOID AND THE DUCK WILL COME DOWN AND GIVE YOU A HUNDRED DOLLARS!
HAHA HAHAHA HA!

THIS IS TERRIBLE! YOU HAVE SAVED MY LIFE!
TERRIBLE?
MY GOODNESS GRACIOUS, YES! SINCE I OWE YOU MY LIFE, I MUST GRANT YOUR DESIRE TO BE MY PUPILS... BUT YOU HAVE NOT THROWN YOURSELVES OFF A MOUNTAIN!
IT IS A DREADFUL QUANDARY!
SO, I WILL ALLOW YOU TO BE MY PUPILS FOR ONE DAY... TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT. AND AS MY PUPILS, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO CARRY MY BURDENS.
OKAY!
GREAT!
THIS WILL BE YOUR FIRST LESSON, THEN. HAVE YOU READ THE BHAGAVAD GITA, THE VEDAS, AND THE MAHABHARATA?
OH, YES, SIR!
ARK! ARK! ARK!
THIS IS TOO BAD! YOU MUST FORGET IT ALL! LISTEN ONLY TO ME! UNDERSTAND ONLY ME! BE OPEN ONLY TO--
--LITTLE DOG! BE QUIET!
ARK! ARK! ARK! ARK!
ARK! ARK! AR--!
POOF!
--AND I WILL LEAD YOU TO THE NARROW PATH OF TRUTH AND UNIVERSAL ONENESS!

THE FIRST THING TO LEARN IS THAT YOUR MIND IS BUT A SMALL PART OF THE UNIVERSAL MIND. ONCE YOU HAVE...
'SCUSE ME, DR. DHARMA, BUT COULD YOU BRING MY DOG BACK NOW? HE WON'T BARK, I PROMISE.
ONCE YOU HAVE REALIZED THIS, THERE IS NOTHING BEYOND YOUR GRASP.
SNAP
FOR INSTANCE. IF YOU CAN, TELL ME WHAT THAT LADY IS THINKING.
I WILL TRY... SHE IS UPSET... THERE IS SOME PAIN... TIREDNESS...
NO...NO ..NO! DEAR ME. YOU ARE READING FEELINGS. ANYONE MAY DO THAT! READ HER THOUGHTS
HMMM... HER FEET ARE HURTING AND SHE IS TIRED BECAUSE SHE IS WALKING HER SISTER'S DOG. SHE DOES NOT LIKE HER SISTER AND SHE HATES THE DOG..!
FURTHER... SHE HAS PLANNED A DINNER PARTY AND HER MAID JUST QUIT... TO BECOME A C.P.A.
GEE, I WONDER HOW HE KNOWS THAT...? WE CAN'T CHECK TO FIND OUT IF HE'S RIGHT...
OH, YES, I AM RIGHT, LITTLE SIR. YOU MAY RELY ON THAT!

BUT EVEN IF I WERE NOT, IT WOULD NOT MATTER. IF THE JOY IS NOT IN THE DOING, THEN, DEAR ME, WHAT IS THE POINT?
"TRY AGAIN... AND THIS TIME, LISTEN TO THOUGHTS!
VERY WELL, BUT... WAIT, I DO HEAR A VOICE! IT IS SAYING... "NO GOOD IDIOTS! CREEPS! THROWIN' ME OUTTA THAT BAR... ALL I WANT IS A LI'L DRINK..."
"...IF HARRY HADN'T TRICKED ME, FRAMED ME, I'D BE RICH NOW... POWERFUL... 'STEAD OF A LOUSY DRUNK! ...NOBODY'D SPIT ON BEN MOPES, THEN, NOSIREE..."
VERY GOOD. NOW, SHUN THE SURFACE THOUGHTS AND DIVE INTO HIS PAST AS THOUGH YOU WERE A SWIMMER
MOPES AND HAUSER
"...HEY! THAT INDIAN KID OVER THERE IS SAYIN' MY THOUGHTS!"
HEY, THAT INDIAN KID OVER THERE IS SAYIN' MY THOUGHTS!
"AN' THAT WEIRD OLD GUY IS HELPIN' HIM! I'M GONNA BUST HIS..."
THAT IS VERY GOOD, ONE CALLED "HAPJI." YOJ MAY STOP NOW.

MY LIFE IS A SEWER, AN' NOW I DON'T EVEN HAVE PRIVATE THOUGHTS ANYMORE... I OUGHTTA...
AW, WHAT'S TH' USE? I'M WORTHLESS... NO MONEY... NO JOB... NOTHIN'! WHAT'S IT MATTER WHO KNOWS IT?
GEE, MR. MOPES... CAN'T YOU GET YOUR JOB BACK?
NOPE. NOT LIKELY. AFTER I RAN OUT OF THAT BOARD MEETING, I FORFEITED ALL MY STOCKS AND SALARY. I LOST MY HOME, MY CAR-- EVERYTHING.
AND I'VE LOST EVERY JOB I GOT AFTER THAT. MY LUCK'S ROTTEN!
YOU LOST THE JANITOR JOB BECAUSE YOU WERE DRUNK, AND THE PIZZA DELIVERY JOB BECAUSE YOU THREW A PIZZA AT THE MANAGER.
THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING, HUH? HE DESERVED IT, AN'... WAIT A SECOND. YOU DO KNOW EVERYTHING! YOU COULD CHANGE MY LUCK!
C'MON, BE A PAL! YOU'RE TEACHIN' THESE KIDS. TEACH ME, TOO! I COULD BE A BIG MAN AGAIN!
YEAH! IT'D BE FUN TO BE RICH!
AND POWERFUL!
BIG MAN? HMMMM

SUCH POWER IS KNOWN...THE ANCIENT TEACHERS COULD MAKE THEMSELVES AS LARGE AS MOUNTAINS OR AS SMALL AS RICE GRAINS. ONE MUST ONLY BELIEVE...
WAIT, DR. DHARMA... HE DIDN'T MEAN. . . GOSH!
WE ARE GROWING!
DOCTOR! WE'RE TALL ENOUGH! DOCTOR?
WE ARE AS BIG AS ANYTHING! IT IS WONDERFUL!
WE'RE HUGE!
YEAH! AN' I'M BIG ENOUGH TO EVEN THE SCORE WITH HARRY!
HARRRRY! WHERE ARE YOU, HARRRY? IT'S BEN, HARRY!
NO, NO! YOU MUSTN'T! YOU'LL KILL HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE!
SOON WE WILL BE AS LARGE AS THE EARTH! WHAT WILL HAPPEN THEN?
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I HAVE TO GET HIM. I HAVE...
YOU CAN'T!
I'M GOING TO CRUSH EVERYBODY! I CAN'T BE THIS BIG! I CAN'T!

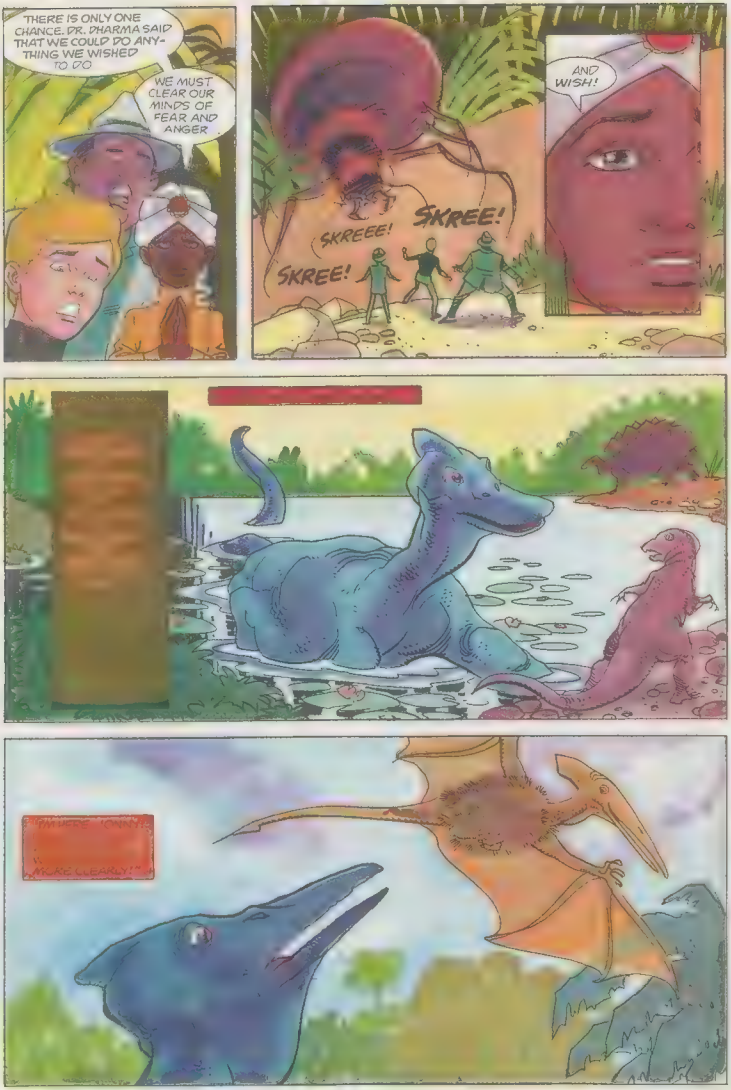
MEANWHILE...
IT'S BEEN A WHILE. I JUST HOPE JONNY ISN'T IN ANY TROUBLE.
HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF, DOC. YOU KNOW THAT. WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT IS THAT ENGINE. DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN SUPER-CHARGE IT?
SURE, I'M THE "BOY GENIUS," AREN'T I? DO I EVER TELL YOU THAT THREE COLLEGES OFFERED MY PARENTS BRIBES TO ENROLL ME? THAT'S AN ODD THING TO HAPPEN TO YOU, WHEN YOU'RE SIXTEEN.
I WOULDN'T KNOW. THERE WERE COLLEGES WILLING TO BRIBE MY PARENTS TO KEEP ME OUT!
I BET IT'S GREAT, HAVING FOLKS KNOW HOW SMART YOU ARE.
SURE IT IS... TILL THE FIRST TIME YOU FAIL.
I STILL MISS HER, YOU KNOW, JONNY'S MOTHER, I MEAN. I WONDER HOW LONG YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO MOURN? IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS.
I THINK YOU'LL KNOW. THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANY-ONE I REALLY MOURNED, BUT I THINK YOU'LL KNOW.
THIS PLACE IS THE ONLY STABILITY I HAVE LEFT, SO SOMETIMES I PANIC. YOU CAN HAVE TEN DETECTIVE AGENCIES HERE, IF YOU WANT THEM. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
I KNOW IT, DOC. OH, BY THE WAY, YOU JUST MOUNTED THAT UPSIDE DOWN.
OH

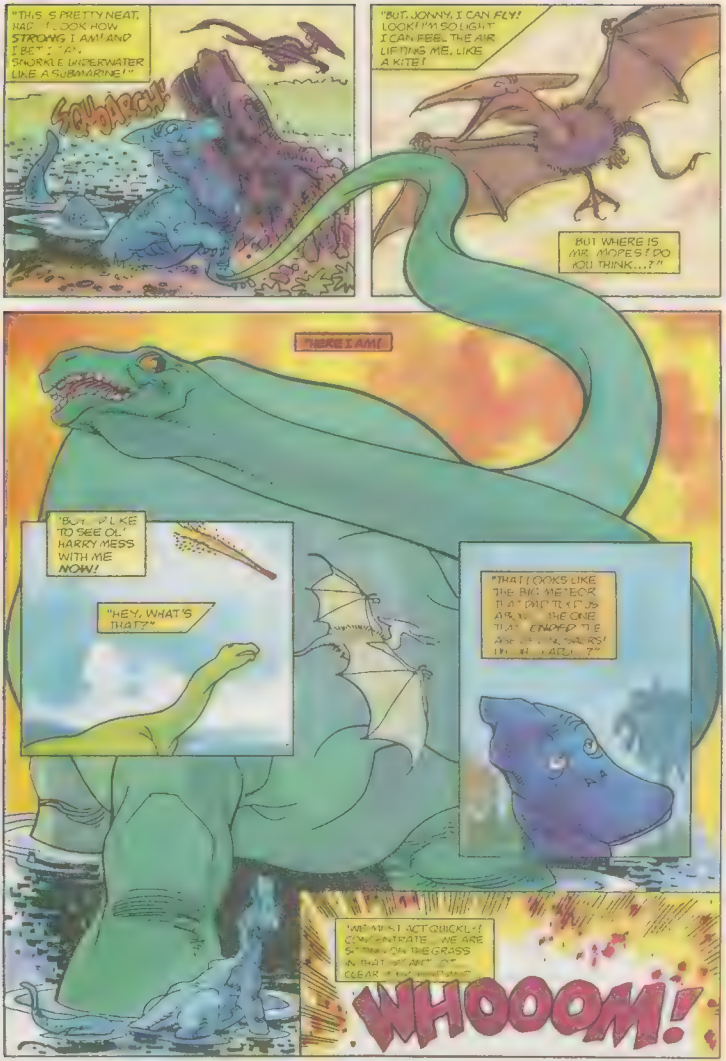
OOF! THE CITY! WE'RE NOT BIG ANYMORE!
ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED WAS THE DESIRE. WAS POWER ALL YOU DREAMED IT WOULD BE?
YEAH, IT WAS PEACHY! I TURNED INTO A RAVIN' LUNATIC!
SORRY, KID. SEEMS LIKE I CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT.
THAT'S OKAY.
IT IS THE ANGER WHICH BLOCKS YOU, GOODNESS ME! GIVE THAT UP, AND WEALTH AND POSITION WILL ONCE MORE BE YOURS!
LISTEN, MY HATING HARRY IS ALL I GOT LEFT. I'M NOT TRADIN' THAT FOR ANYTHIN'...
C'MON, KIDS. I GOT FIVE BUCKS LEFT FROM MY LAST JOB. I'M TREATIN' FOR HOT DOGS!
MOVIE
QUAD 3 CINEMA
I MEANT THE ANGER YOU HAVE AGAINST YOURSELF.

USUALLY, I DO NOT EAT MEAT, BUT, GOODNESS ME, THOSE LOOK GOOD.
RIGHT, GUNGA DIN, I HEARD THAT BEFORE. YOU WANT MUSTARD OR WHAT?
OH, NO...VERY MILD FOR ME, PLEASE. AND...DO NOT WORRY THAT YOUR WIFE HAS LEFT YOU AND YOU ARE SOON TO BE FIRED. THESE ARE BUT GROWTH HAPPENINGS. YOU SHOULD WELCOME THEM!
HOW'D YOU...? I MEAN, YOU'RE FULLA HOT AIR! GET OUTTA HERE!
GIVE HIM HIS HOT DOG FIRST!
YES! THAT IS FAIR!
OH, HE'LL GET HIS HOT DOG, ALL RIGHT!
THIS IS MOST DELICIOUS! JUST RIGHT, GOOD SIR!
AS I WAS SAYING, THERE ARE CERTAIN TIDES IN THE UNIVERSAL CURRENTS, AND EVIL IS OFTEN ITS OWN REWARD.
I JUST DON'T BUY THAT!

"ALL OF LIFE IS A BALANCE...
"...AND A BALANCE SEEKS TO CORRECT ITSELF. IS THAT SO HARD TO BELIEVE?"
I DUNNO... I'D HAFTA SEE THAT T'BELIEVE IT!
AND SOON.
I DUNNO IF I WANT TO TRY THIS AGAIN...
WE MUST, TO FOLLOW THE MYSTIC PATH!
PLEASE, CONCENTRATE. FEEL THE GRASS BENEATH YOU... BECOME AT ONE WITH IT... SINK DOWN... SINK DOWN...
HEY, I FEEL THE GRASS AROUND MY ELBOWS! THE GRASS IS GROWING!
NO, JONNY... WE ARE SHRINKING!
WOW! WE SURE ARE! I WONDER WHAT WE'LL FIND DOWN HERE ..?
SPARE CHANGE, I BET. FOLKS ARE ALWAYS LOSIN' CHANGE IN THE GRASS.
THIS IS OUR CHANCE T'BE TREASURE HUNTERS!

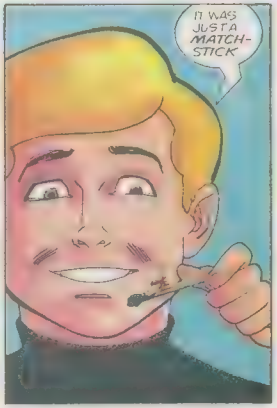
I DO NOT KNOW... I THINK COINS MIGHT BE A LITTLE HARD TO FIND IN THIS!
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, KID. THIS IS ANOTHER WORLD!
AT OUR NORMAL SIZE, WE COULDN'T EVEN SEE THIS STUFF.
THIS ISN'T AN INSECT EXACTLY, BUT IT'S EVEN SMALLER THAN WE ARE!
I WONDER WHAT ELSE WE'LL FIND...?
SKREEE! SKREEE!
YIKE! SOME THING JUST FOUND US!
QUICK KIDS, RUN!
RRUNNH!
SKREEE! SKREEE!
I THINK THIS IS MOSS. BUT IT FEELS LIKE A SWAMP!
HURRY UP! WE GOTTA KEEP MOVING!
OH, NO! THIS LOG IS TOO BIG TO CLIMB AND TOO HEAVY TO MOVE!
WE CAN'T GET AROUND IT! WE'RE TRAPPED!


THERE IS ONLY ONE CHANCE. DR. DHARMA SAID THAT WE COULD DO ANYTHING WE WISHED TO DO
WE MUST CLEAR OUR MINDS OF FEAR AND ANGER
AND WISH!
SKREEE!
SKREE!
SKREE!
"I'M HERE, JONNY!
MORE CLEARLY!"


"THIS IS PRETTY NEAT, HAD I LOOK HOW STRONG I AM! AND I BET I CAN SNORKLE UNDERWATER LIKE A SUBMARINE!"
SCHOARCH!
"BUT, JONNY, I CAN FLY! LOOK! I'M SO LIGHT I CAN FEEL THE AIR LIFTING ME, LIKE A KITE!
BUT WHERE IS MR. MOPES? DO YOU THINK...?"
"HERE I AM!
"BUT I'D LIKE TO SEE OL' HARRY MESS WITH ME NOW!
"HEY, WHAT'S THAT?"
"THAT LOOKS LIKE THE BIG METEOR THAT DAD TOLD US ABOUT... THE ONE THAT ENDED THE AGE OF DINOSAURS! UH... HAPPY...?"
WHOOOM!

EXCELLENT! GOODNESS ME, A FINE SHOWING, ONE CALLED "HADJI."

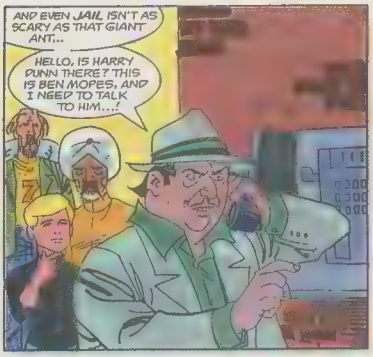
WE DID IT! WE SURVIVED!
WE ESCAPED THE METEOR!


IT WAS JUST A MATCH-STICK

MOST BARRIERS, ONE CALLED "JONNY," ARE JUST A QUESTION OF DEGREE.
AS WAS SAID BEFORE...ONE CAN DO WHATEVER ONE WISHES.
UNFORTUNATELY, MOST PEOPLE WISH TO BE UNHAPPY.

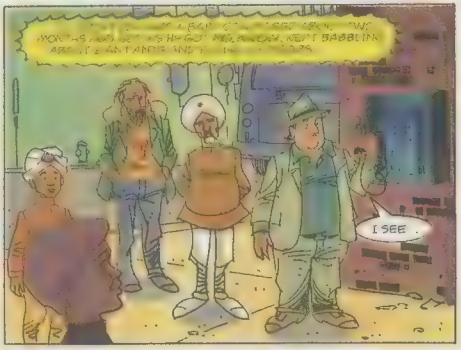
I'M GETTING PRETTY DAMN SICK AND TIRED OF YOUR ATTITUDE! YOU'RE NO BETTER OFF THAN I AM. YOU'RE A BUM, TOO! WHERE D'YOU GET OFF, TELLIN' ME HOW TO RUN MY LIFE?
THIS IS A GOOD POINT...BUT I AM HAPPY AND YOU ARE NOT. THAT IS, PERHAPS, A DIFFERENCE.

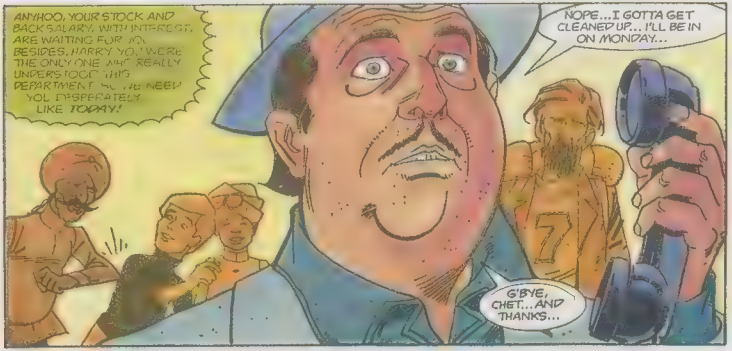
DON'T LET HIM PUT YOU DOWN, BEN! YOU LIKE THE LIFE!
YEAH, MAN...WHAT'S HE KNOW? WE'RE THE CUTTIN' EDGE, MAN!
ACID JOHN AND ALL-GRITS MARY ARE MY FRIENDS. THEY'RE ALL I NEED NOW!
WE'RE ALL VICTIMS HERE...BOUND TOGETHER WITH HOPELESSNESS!
MARY WAS THROWN OUT OF HER APARTMENT TO MAKE WAY FOR A CONDO...
...AND ACID JOHN JUST CAN'T SEEM TO FIT IN ANYWHERE... LIKE ME.
RIGHT ON, MAN!
WE'RE ALL HELPLESS HERE--DOOMED! IF I WAS TO TRY AND FIGHT HARRY, I'D JUST END UP IN PRISON!
OH, GOODNESS GRACIOUS ME! I MUST REMEMBER THIS...HELPLESS AND HOPELESS...YES, I CAN SEE THIS NOW..
I'LL SHOW YOU! I GUESS IF I CAN SURVIVE A METEORITE, I CAN FACE DOWN A SLUG LIKE HARRY DUNN!


AND EVEN JAIL ISN'T AS SCARY AS THAT GIANT ANT...
HELLO, IS HARRY DUNN THERE? THIS IS BEN MOPES, AND I NEED TO TALK TO HIM...!

SORRY, PAL. NO CAN DO... HARRY WENT BYE-BYE ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO. HE WON'T BE AVAILABLE FOR ABOUT EIGHT-TO-TEN...

WAIT A SEC! BEN? BEN MOPES? IS IT REALLY YOU? WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU, GUY! ALL IS FORGIVEN. COME HOME, PRONTO!
BUT BUT... CHARGES...?


I SEE


ANYHOO, YOUR STOCK AND BACK SALARY, WITH INTEREST, ARE WAITING FOR YOU. BESIDES, HARRY, YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO REALLY UNDERSTOOD THIS DEPARTMENT. WE NEED YOU DESPERATELY LIKE TODAY!
NOPE... I GOTTA GET CLEANED UP... I'LL BE IN ON MONDAY...
G'BYE, CHET... AND THANKS...

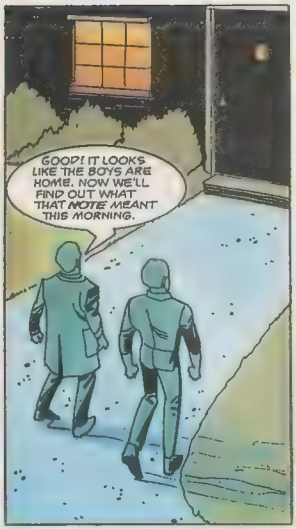
I...I GUESS I'M RICH... I'M RICH...

I'M RICH! LET'S ORDER PIZZA AND HAVE A PARTY!

TEACH ME! TEACH ME, TOO! MAKE ME RICH! MAKE ME FAMOUS!
NO...NO! GRACIOUS ME, I DO NOT WANT PUPILS!

BUT WHERE CAN WE HOLD A PARTY? THIS LOT AIN'T FITTIN', AN' IT GETS MIGHTY COLD AT NIGHT...

"I KNOW A PLACE!"
I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT, DOC. YOU ACTUALLY GOT ANOTHER TWENTY PERCENT OUT OF THAT ENGINE!
I'M JUST GLAD IT FINALLY WORKED! I HAD MY DOUBTS WHEN THAT TURBINE STARTED SPINNING BACKWARDS!
HA! HA! YOU LOOKED FUNNY AS WE WERE BEING PRAGGED INTO IT!


GOOD! IT LOOKS LIKE THE BOYS ARE HOME. NOW WE'LL FIND OUT WHAT THAT *NOTE* MEANT THIS MORNING.

YOU KNOW, RACE... NO MATTER WHAT ADVENTURES WE HAVE OR WHAT DANGERS WE FACE, THERE'S SOMETHING SO COMFORTING ABOUT COMING HOME.
IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE BORING, A LITTLE PREDICTABLE, BUT...

...BUT-- I...

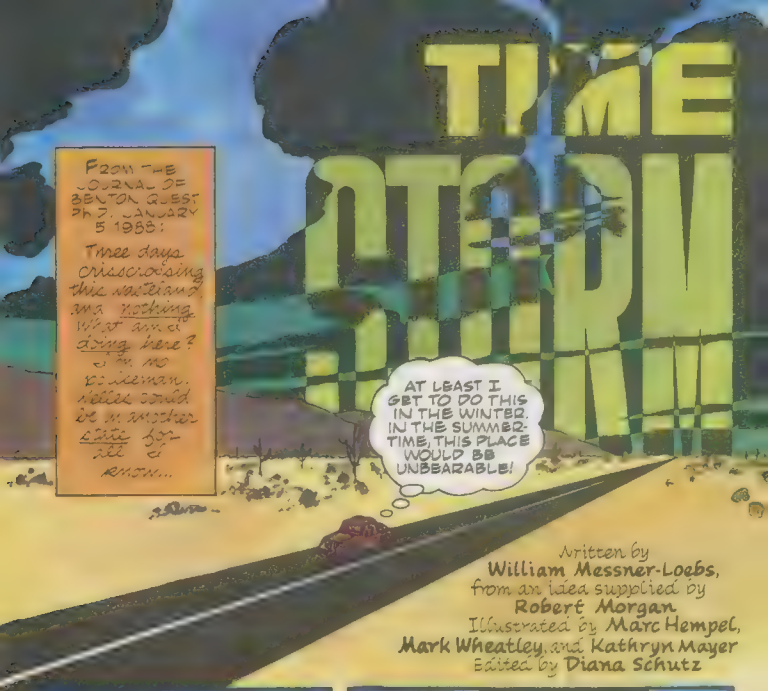
CONGRATS, BEN!
AH, A GRACIOUS EVENING TO YOU, GENTLEMEN! I AM DR. PHARMA, YOUR INSTRUCTOR IN THE MYSTIC SCIENCES!
PLEASE TO HAVE SOME PIZZA AND RELAX! THE PARTY IS JUST GETTING STARTED, DEAR ME, YES!
GET'M WHILE THEY'RE HOT, PEOPLE!
SODA
OOOOOOHMM...
JONNY!
END

TIME STORM

FROM THE JOURNAL OF BENTON QUEST Ph.D. JANUARY 5 1988:

Three days crisscrossing this wasteland, and nothing. What am I doing here? I'm no policeman. Nelles could be in another state for all I know...

AT LEAST I GET TO DO THIS IN THE WINTER. IN THE SUMMER-TIME, THIS PLACE WOULD BE UNBEARABLE!

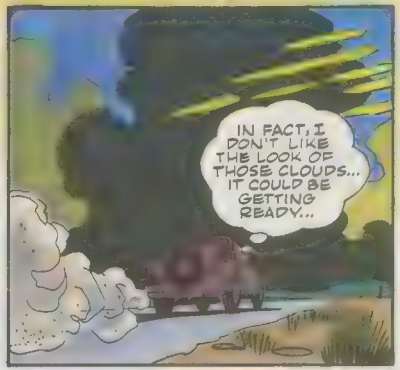


Written by **William Messner-Loebs**, from an idea supplied by **Robert Morgan**
Illustrated by **Marc Hempel**, **Mark Wheatley**, and **Kathryn Mayer**
Edited by **Diana Schutz**

Just because I'm a scientist and a scientific complex was robbed, the authorities are convinced I can catch the thief...

Brrrr! IT'S GETTING REAL CHILLY!

IN FACT, I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THOSE CLOUDS... IT COULD BE GETTING READY...



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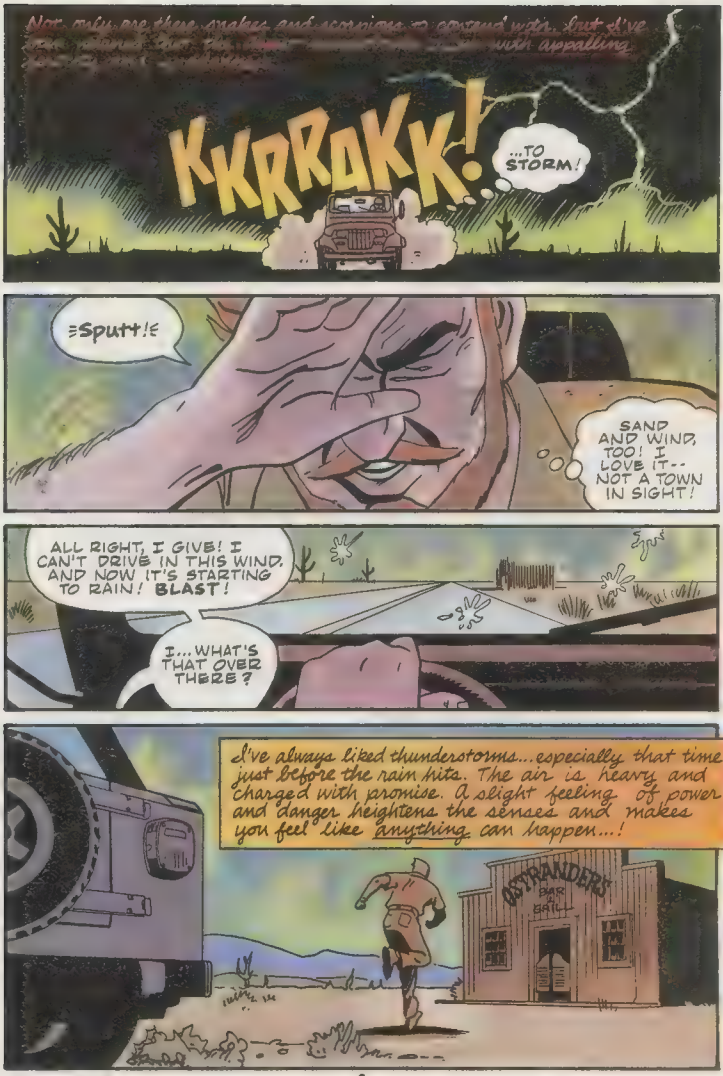
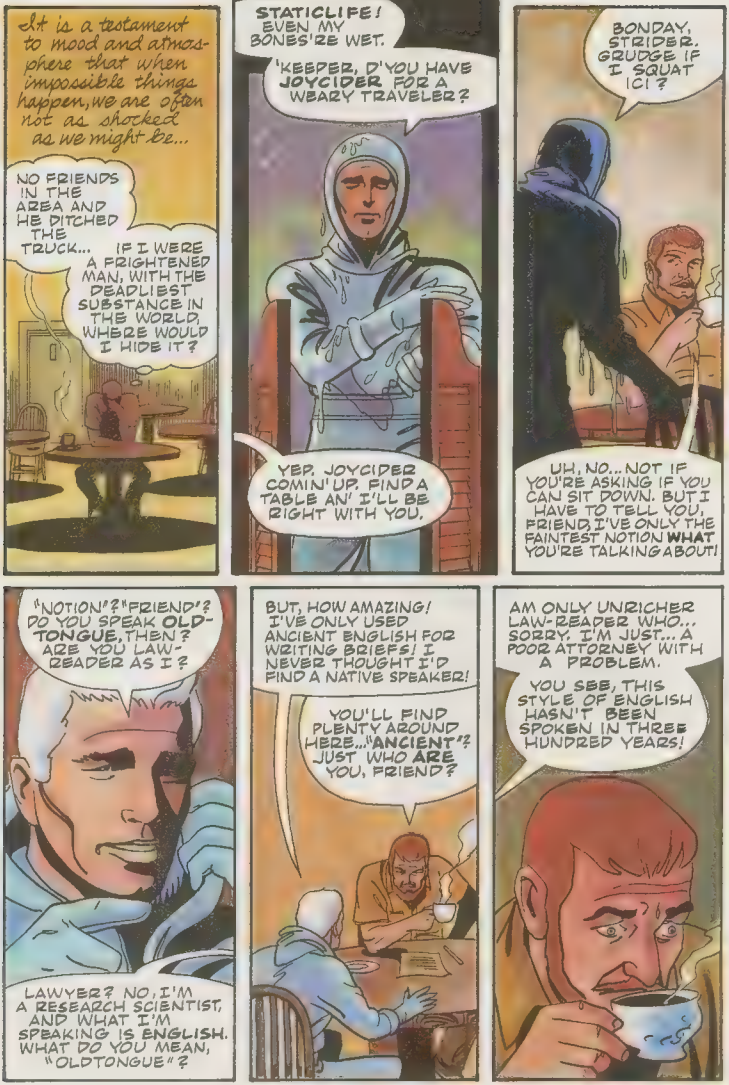
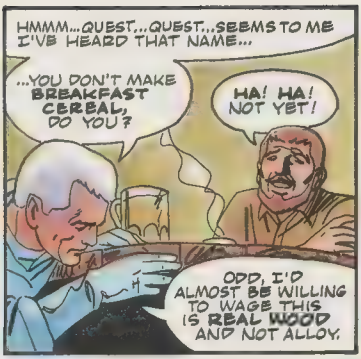

Not only are there snakes and scorpions to contend with, but it's
with appalling
KKRRAKK!
...TO STORM!
=Sputt!=
SAND AND WIND, TOO! I LOVE IT-- NOT A TOWN IN SIGHT!
ALL RIGHT, I GIVE! I CAN'T DRIVE IN THIS WIND, AND NOW IT'S STARTING TO RAIN! BLAST!
I...WHAT'S THAT OVER THERE?
I've always liked thunderstorms....especially that time just before the rain hits. The air is heavy and charged with promise. A slight feeling of power and danger heightens the senses and makes you feel like anything can happen...!
OSTRANDER'S
BAR
GRILL

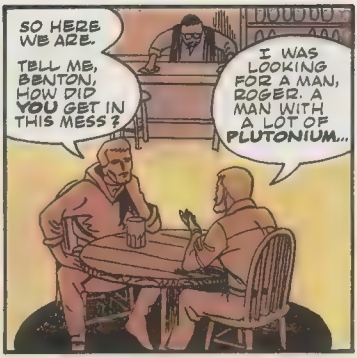
HOWDY, FRIEND.
YEW JEST PASSIN' THREW?
IN A WAY... GAD, I'M COLD... COULD I POSSIBLY HAVE SOMETHING WARM TO DRINK?
THASS'LL WARM YEW... OR I C'N MAKE YOU A TODDY OR A FLAMIN' BRANDY SURPRISE...
OLD DEAD INJUN
NO, SORRY... ALCOHOL JUST PUTS ME TO SLEEP. YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ANY HOT MINT TEA, BY CHANCE?
YARB TEA, COMIN' UP.
GREAT... BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN? HE WAS HEADED THIS WAY AND HIS NAME'S GEORGE WELLES, THOUGH HE MAY BE CALLING HIMSELF SOMETHING ELSE.
AIN'T SEED 'IM, BUT THEN, DON'T SEE MOST FOLKS.
FIND Y'RSELF A TABLE, IF Y'CAN. I'LL BRING THE YARB TEA DIRECTLY.
UH, THANKS.

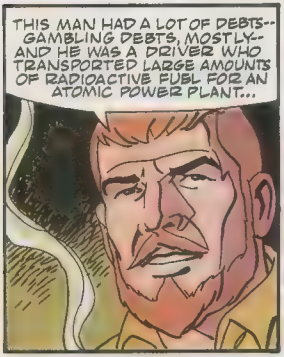

It is a testament to mood and atmosphere that when impossible things happen, we are often not as shocked as we might be...
NO FRIENDS IN THE AREA AND HE DITCHED THE TRUCK... IF I WERE A FRIGHTENED MAN, WITH THE DEADLIEST SUBSTANCE IN THE WORLD, WHERE WOULD I HIDE IT?
STATICLIFE! EVEN MY BONES'RE WET.
'KEEPER, D'YOU HAVE JOYCIDER FOR A WEARY TRAVELER?
YEP, JOYCIDER COMIN' UP. FIND A TABLE AN' I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.
BONDAY, STRIDER. GRUDGE IF I SQUAT ICI?
UH, NO... NOT IF YOU'RE ASKING IF YOU CAN SIT DOWN. BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU, FRIEND, I'VE ONLY THE FAINTEST NOTION WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
"NOTION"? "FRIEND"? DO YOU SPEAK OLD-TONGUE, THEN? ARE YOU LAW-READER AS I?
LAWYER? NO, I'M A RESEARCH SCIENTIST, AND WHAT I'M SPEAKING IS ENGLISH. WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "OLDTONGUE"?
BUT, HOW AMAZING! I'VE ONLY USED ANCIENT ENGLISH FOR WRITING BRIEFS! I NEVER THOUGHT I'D FIND A NATIVE SPEAKER!
YOU'LL FIND PLENTY AROUND HERE... "ANCIENT"? JUST WHO ARE YOU, FRIEND?
AM ONLY UNRICHER LAW-READER WHO... SORRY. I'M JUST... A POOR ATTORNEY WITH A PROBLEM.
YOU SEE, THIS STYLE OF ENGLISH HASN'T BEEN SPOKEN IN THREE HUNDRED YEARS!

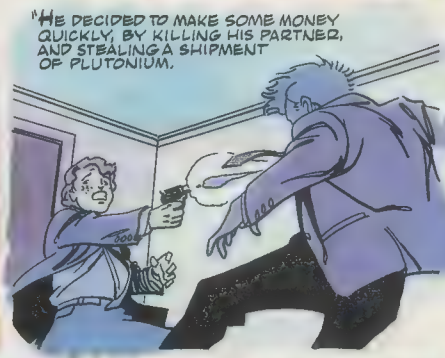
THREE HUNDRED YEARS? BUT THIS IS 1988, JUST AFTER NEW YEAR'S!
NO, IT ISN'T! IT'S FIVE DAYS AFTER NEW YEAR'S, BUT THE YEAR IS 2312!
I THINK YOU'RE A LITTLE CONFUSED, FRIEND.
PERHAPS SO, BUT MY DRIVER'S LICENSE MUST BE CONFUSED, TOO.
AMAZING! AND THESE CARDS ARE REAL PLASTIC! THEY'D COST A FORTUNE TO FORGE!
I HAVE TO PIP A PHOTO OF THIS!
HOW SHOULD I STAND?
MOVE IF YOU WANT. I JUST NEED TO COPY YOUR DIGITIZED MOVEMENT STRUCTURE.
THERE...THIS DOESN'T MEAN I TOTALLY BELIEVE YOUR STORY, BUT A MAN MUST BE OPEN-MINDED.
THIS IS FANTASTIC... TECHNOLOGY SO ADVANCED, YET IT FITS INSIDE A WATCH!
YER JOYCIDER.
DANKEBIEN.
I THINK I SAW A "WATCH" ONCE. IT WAS IN A MUSEUM...
SAY, I NEVER DID THAT!

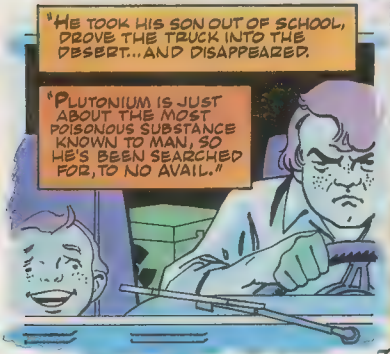
I KNOW. IT'S PROGRAMMED TO GO THROUGH RANDOM MOVEMENTS BASED ON YOUR BODY TYPE... AFTER ALL, IT'S JUST ELECTRO-STATICALLY CHARGED AIR...
...THAT EVENTUALLY LOSES ITS CHARGE.
FTSSS
REMARKABLE. BUT YOU SAID YOU HAVE NO WATCHES. HOW DO YOU TELL TIME?
MOST OF US HAVE TIME-CHIPS IMPLANTED IN OUR INNER EAR... SO WE HEAR THE TIME. FOR INSTANCE...
...IT'S 68.4 HOURS, METRIC... WHICH WOULD TRANSLATE TO ABOUT 4:38 P.M., OLDTIME.
YOU'RE RIGHT! AT LEAST WE AGREE ON THAT.
WE'RE WELL CROSSED, THEN. MY NAME'S ROGER.
MINE'S BENTON QUEST. I'M GLAD TO MEET YOU, EVEN IF THESE ARE THE STRANGEST CIRCUMSTANCES POSSIBLE.

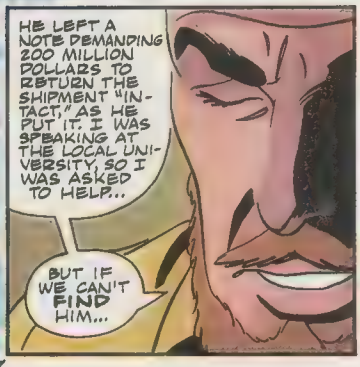

HMMM...QUEST...QUEST...SEEMS TO ME I'VE HEARD THAT NAME...
...YOU DON'T MAKE BREAKFAST CEREAL, DO YOU?
HA! HA! NOT YET!
ODD, I'D ALMOST BE WILLING TO WAGE THIS IS REAL WOOD AND NOT ALLOY.

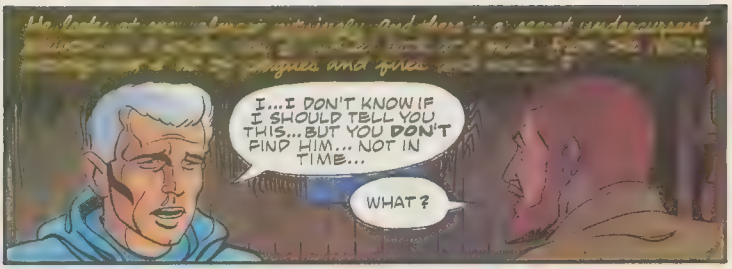

SO HERE WE ARE.
TELL ME, BENTON, HOW DID YOU GET IN THIS MESS?
I WAS LOOKING FOR A MAN, ROGER. A MAN WITH A LOT OF PLUTONIUM...

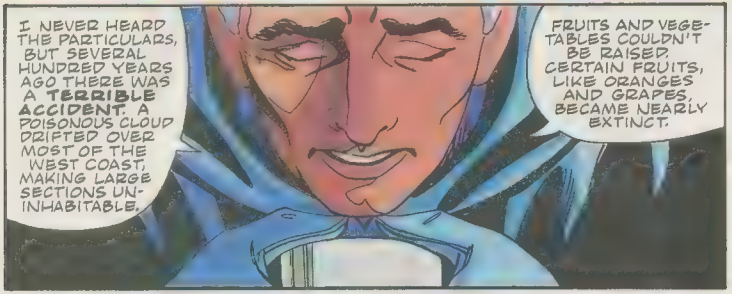

THIS MAN HAD A LOT OF DEBTS--GAMBLING DEBTS, MOSTLY--AND HE WAS A DRIVER WHO TRANSPORTED LARGE AMOUNTS OF RADIOACTIVE FUEL FOR AN ATOMIC POWER PLANT...

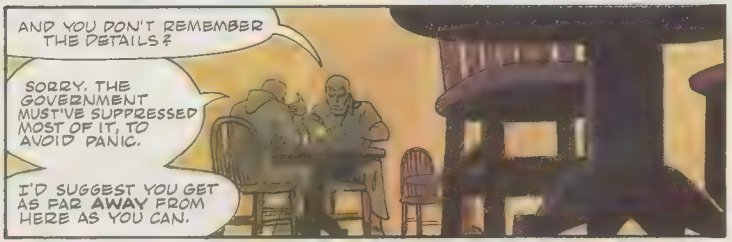

"HE DECIDED TO MAKE SOME MONEY QUICKLY, BY KILLING HIS PARTNER, AND STEALING A SHIPMENT OF PLUTONIUM.
BOOM

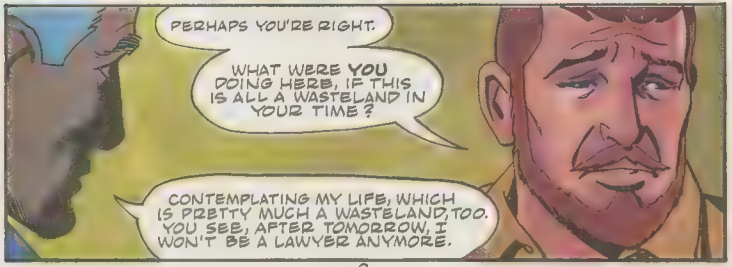

"HE TOOK HIS SON OUT OF SCHOOL, DROVE THE TRUCK INTO THE DESERT...AND DISAPPEARED.
"PLUTONIUM IS JUST ABOUT THE MOST POISONOUS SUBSTANCE KNOWN TO MAN, SO HE'S BEEN SEARCHED FOR, TO NO AVAIL."


HE LEFT A NOTE DEMANDING 200 MILLION DOLLARS TO RETURN THE SHIPMENT "INTACT," AS HE PUT IT. I WAS SPEAKING AT THE LOCAL UNIVERSITY, SO I WAS ASKED TO HELP...
BUT IF WE CAN'T FIND HIM...

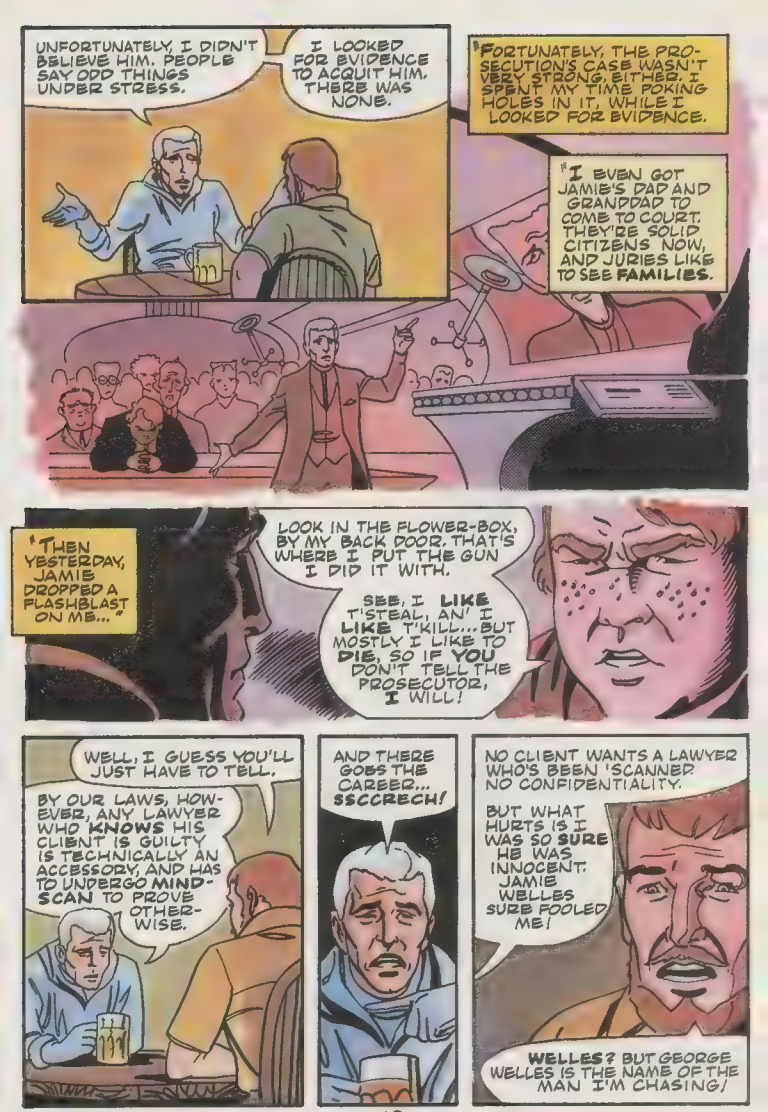

I...I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD TELL YOU THIS...BUT YOU DON'T FIND HIM... NOT IN TIME...
WHAT?

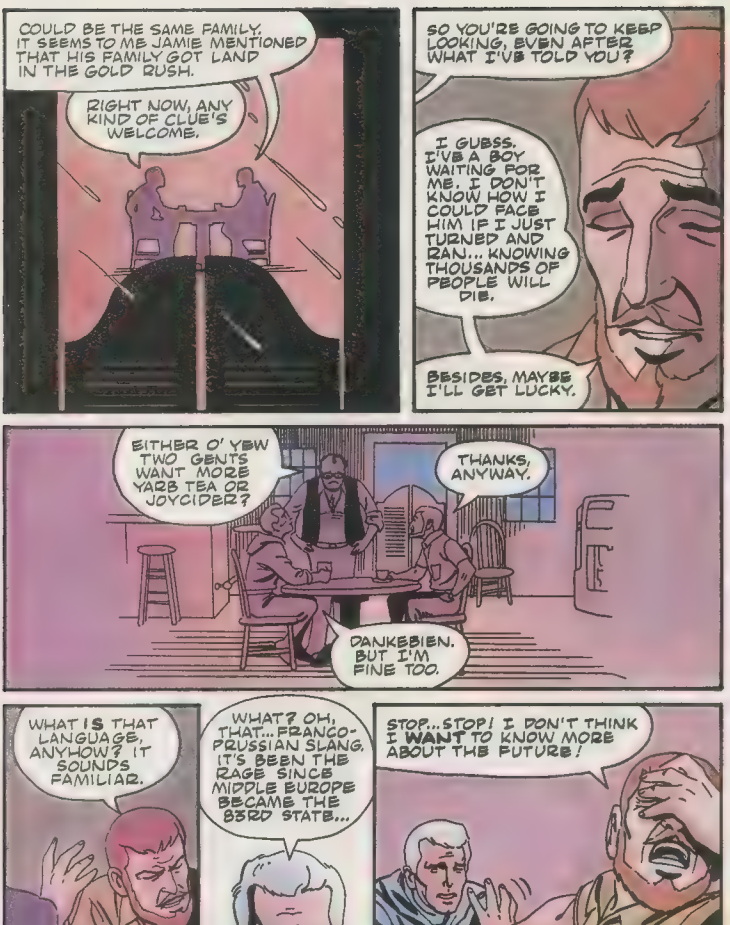

I NEVER HEARD THE PARTICULARS, BUT SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AGO THERE WAS A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT. A POISONOUS CLOUD DRIFTED OVER MOST OF THE WEST COAST, MAKING LARGE SECTIONS UNINHABITABLE.
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES COULDN'T BE RAISED. CERTAIN FRUITS, LIKE ORANGES AND GRAPES, BECAME NEARLY EXTINCT.

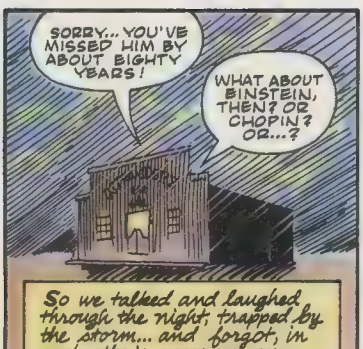

AND YOU DON'T REMEMBER THE DETAILS?
SORRY. THE GOVERNMENT MUST'VE SUPPRESSED MOST OF IT, TO AVOID PANIC.
I'D SUGGEST YOU GET AS FAR AWAY FROM HERE AS YOU CAN.


PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT.
WHAT WERE YOU DOING HERE, IF THIS IS ALL A WASTELAND IN YOUR TIME?
CONTEMPLATING MY LIFE, WHICH IS PRETTY MUCH A WASTELAND, TOO. YOU SEE, AFTER TOMORROW, I WON'T BE A LAWYER ANYMORE.

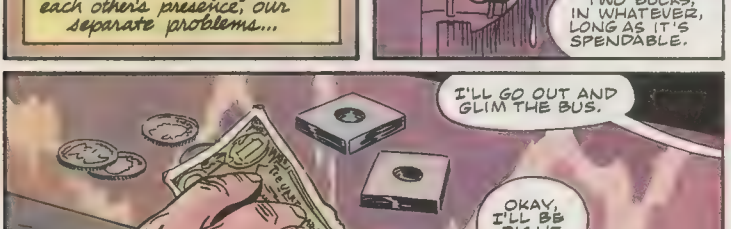
FUNNY THING IS, I WAS A PRETTY GOOD LAWYER, TOO. I HANDLED CRIMINAL CASES MOSTLY... THOUGH I HELPED OUT ON OTHERS...
"OUR BIGGEST CASE IS THE MARSTON ESTATE. BOTH THE WIDOW AND THE CHILDREN ARE TRYING TO GET A STASH OF BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN IN STORAGE SINCE THE EARLY 1990S.
THAT SOUNDS PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD.
OH, IT IS. IT'S THE OTHER CASE THAT'S FLAMED MY ELBOWS! IT'S A MURDER CASE AND I'M BLOCKED ON IT!
"SIX MONTHS AGO, SEVERAL FIRE OPALS WERE STOLEN FROM THE FEDERAL MUSEUM, WITH VIOLENCE. THEY WERE LATER FOUND IN THE HOME OF MY CLIENT, A THREE-TIME LOSER...
"HIS FATHER AND GRANDFATHER BOTH HAD POLICE RECORDS, BUT JAMIE HAD BEEN TRYING TO GO STRAIGHT.
"I FIGURED HE'D BEEN SET UP, BUT THE FIRST WORDS OUT OF HIS MOUTH WERE...
TOO BAD F'R YOU, SHYSTER. I DID IT.

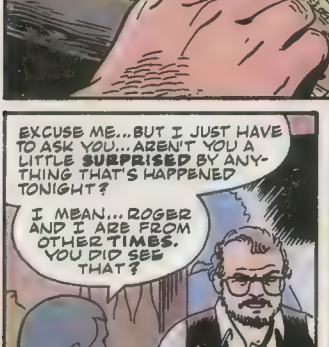

UNFORTUNATELY, I DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM. PEOPLE SAY ODD THINGS UNDER STRESS.
I LOOKED FOR EVIDENCE TO ACQUIT HIM. THERE WAS NONE.
"FORTUNATELY, THE PROSECUTION'S CASE WASN'T VERY STRONG, EITHER. I SPENT MY TIME POKING HOLES IN IT, WHILE I LOOKED FOR EVIDENCE.
"I EVEN GOT JAMIE'S DAD AND GRANDDAD TO COME TO COURT. THEY'RE SOLID CITIZENS NOW, AND JURIES LIKE TO SEE **FAMILIES**.
"THEN YESTERDAY, JAMIE DROPPED A FLASHBLAST ON ME..."
LOOK IN THE FLOWER-BOX, BY MY BACK DOOR. THAT'S WHERE I PUT THE GUN I DID IT WITH.
SEE, I **LIKE** T'STEAL, AN' I **LIKE** T'KILL... BUT MOSTLY I LIKE TO **DIE**, SO IF **YOU** DON'T TELL THE PROSECUTOR, **I** WILL!
WELL, I GUESS YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TELL.
BY OUR LAWS, HOWEVER, ANY LAWYER WHO **KNOWS** HIS CLIENT IS GUILTY IS TECHNICALLY AN ACCESSORY, AND HAS TO UNDERGO **MIND-SCAN** TO PROVE OTHERWISE.
AND THERE GOES THE CAREER... **SSCCRECH!**
NO CLIENT WANTS A LAWYER WHO'S BEEN 'SCANNED! NO CONFIDENTIALITY.
BUT WHAT HURTS IS I WAS SO **SURE** HE WAS INNOCENT. JAMIE WELLES SURE FOOLED ME!
WELLES? BUT GEORGE WELLES IS THE NAME OF THE MAN I'M CHASING!


COULD BE THE SAME FAMILY. IT SEEMS TO ME JAMIE MENTIONED THAT HIS FAMILY GOT LAND IN THE GOLD RUSH.
RIGHT NOW, ANY KIND OF CLUE'S WELCOME.
SO YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP LOOKING, EVEN AFTER WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU?
I GUESS. I'VE A BOY WAITING FOR ME. I DON'T KNOW HOW I COULD FACE HIM IF I JUST TURNED AND RAN... KNOWING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WILL DIE.
BESIDES, MAYBE I'LL GET LUCKY.
EITHER O' YEW TWO GENTS WANT MORE YARB TEA OR JOYCIDER?
THANKS, ANYWAY.
DANKEBIEN. BUT I'M FINE TOO.
WHAT IS THAT LANGUAGE, ANYHOW? IT SOUNDS FAMILIAR.
WHAT? OH, THAT... FRANCO-PRUSSIAN SLANG. IT'S BEEN THE RAGE SINCE MIDDLE EUROPE BECAME THE 83RD STATE...
STOP... STOP! I DON'T THINK I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE!
WELL, I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE PAST! FOR INSTANCE, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN TEDDY ROOSEVELT?


SORRY... YOU'VE MISSED HIM BY ABOUT EIGHTY YEARS!
WHAT ABOUT BINSTEIN, THEN? OR CHOPIN? OR...?
So we talked and laughed through the night, trapped by the storm... and forgot, in each other's presence, our separate problems....

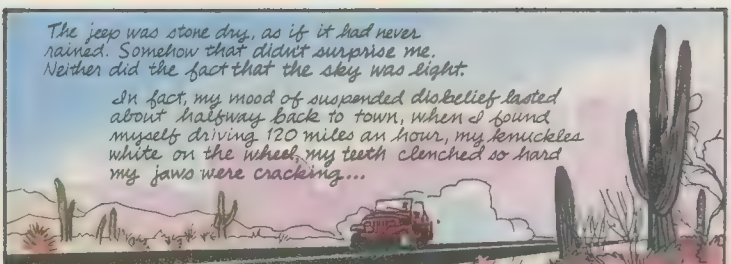
...And at last...
LOOKS LIKE THE RAIN'S LET UP. I SHOULD TRY TO GET TO A TOWN.
TRUE.
WHAT DO WE OWE YOU?
TWO BUCKS, IN WHATEVER, LONG AS IT'S SPENDABLE.

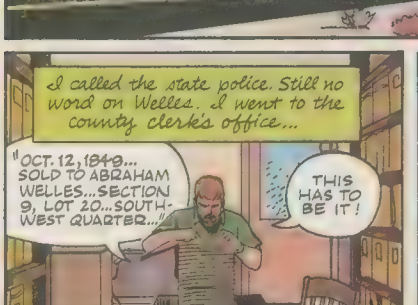

I'LL GO OUT AND GLIM THE BUS.
OKAY, I'LL BE RIGHT OUT.

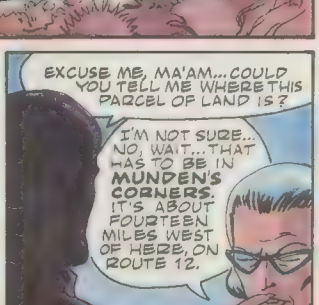

EXCUSE ME... BUT I JUST HAVE TO ASK YOU... AREN'T YOU A LITTLE SURPRISED BY ANYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED TONIGHT?
I MEAN... ROGER AND I ARE FROM OTHER TIMES. YOU DID SEE THAT?
YEP. I MADE NOTE ON IT. DIDN'T BOTHER ME NONE.

'COURSE, I TEND T' TAKE THINGS AS THEY COME. I'VE BEEN DEAD SINCE 1938...
TAKE CARE NOW.

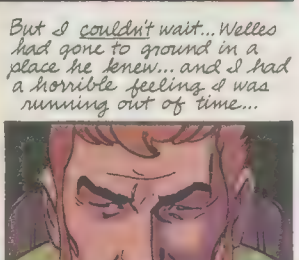
UH...YOU TOO... IT'S BEEN NICE CHATTING...
OVER HERE, BENTON!
ROGER! YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE WHAT THE BARTENDER JUST TOLD ME! I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT ROADHOUSE!
WHAT ROADHOUSE?
IT... IT'S GONE!
I'D SAY WHATEVER FORCES BROUGHT US HERE ARE WEARING OFF. TIME TO GO... WHILE WE STILL CAN!
I NEEDED SOMEONE I COULD TALK TO TONIGHT... SOMEONE NOT A PART OF MY WORLD... PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, YOU KNOW.
I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU, BENTON. DANKEBIEN.
NOR I YOU.
I NEVER ASKED YOU, ROGER, WHAT IS YOUR LAST NAME?
FARE ON, BENTON! LIVE FOREVER!
I'LL DO MY BEST!
BANNON... ROGER BANNON. WHY? IS IT IMPORTANT?
PROBABLY NOT.



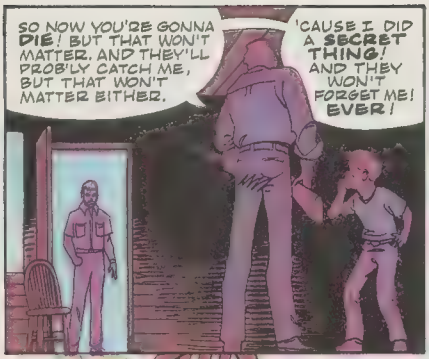


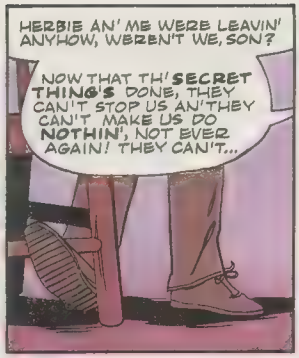


But I couldn't wait... Welles had gone to ground in a place he knew... and I had a horrible feeling I was running out of time...



And this was Munden's Corners, after time had played with it. I hadn't stopped to consider how hard it might be to track a man...even in a ghost town...
...Or how easy...
There was no point in trying
Besides he was probably frightened and tired by now. Maybe I could reason with him...
SEE, DAD? I TOLD YA I SPOTTED HIM!
YOU DID GOOD, SON... REAL GOOD. REMEMBER, ALWAYS SUPPORT ME, 'CAUSE I'M YOUR DAD!
MR. WELLES? GEORGE? MY NAME IS BENTON QUEST... I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND YOU...
I KNOW THAT... DON'T THINK I DON'T! YOU ALL WANT TO FIND ME, 'CAUSE I'M TH' LAST FREE MAN!
AND YOU WANT TO CATCH ME AN' PUT THEM MICROWAVE THINGS IN-SIDE MY HEAD! WELL, I WON'T LET YOU!
I dont know why I never considered that a man who steals 150 pounds of plutonium might possibly be insane.

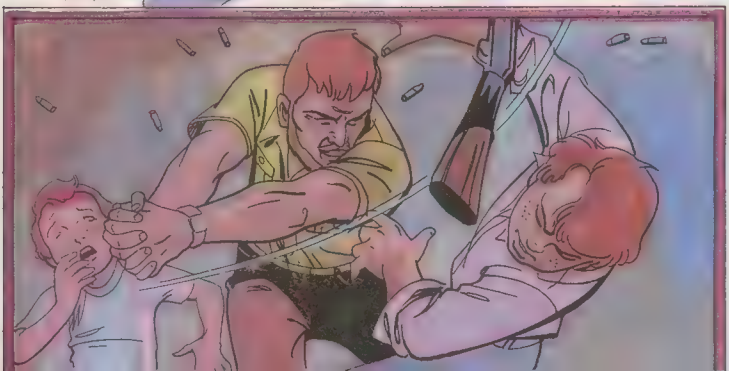

SO NOW YOU'RE GONNA DIE! BUT THAT WON'T MATTER. AND THEY'LL PROB'LY CATCH ME, BUT THAT WON'T MATTER EITHER.
'CAUSE I DID A SECRET THING! AND THEY WON'T FORGET ME! EVER!

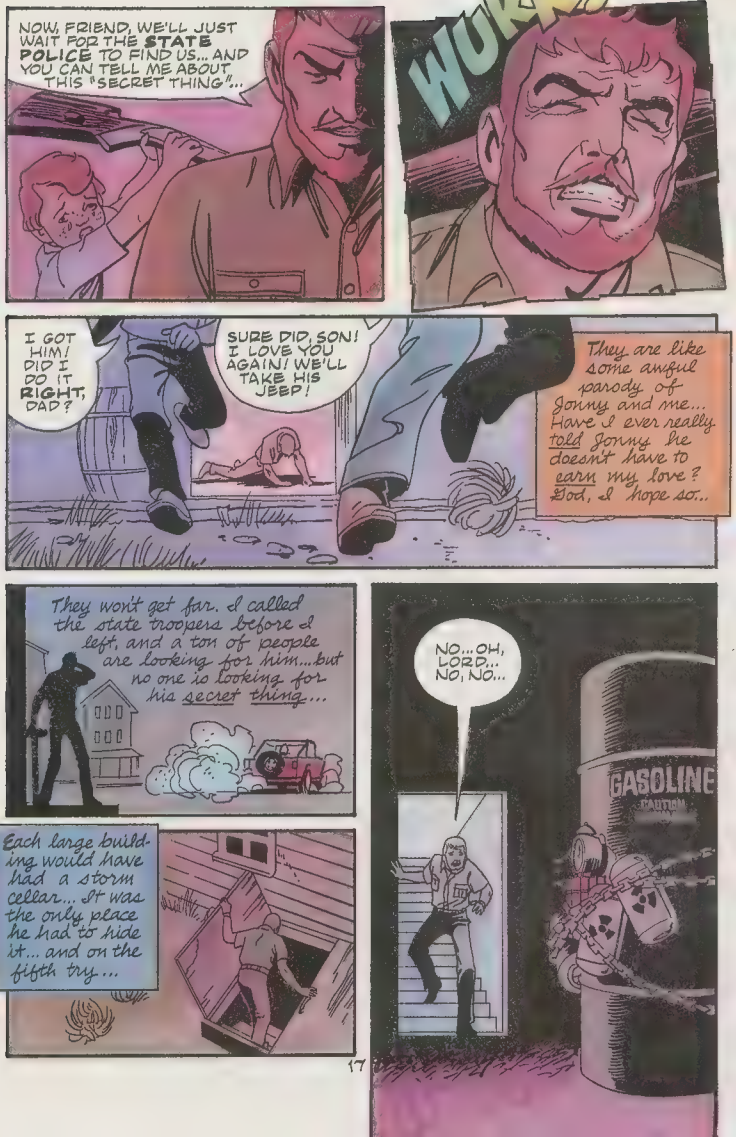

HERBIE AN' ME WERE LEAVIN' ANYHOW, WEREN'T WE, SON?
NOW THAT TH' SECRET THING'S DONE, THEY CAN'T STOP US AN' THEY CAN'T MAKE US DO NOTHIN', NOT EVER AGAIN! THEY CAN'T...

BLAM!
...EVER...

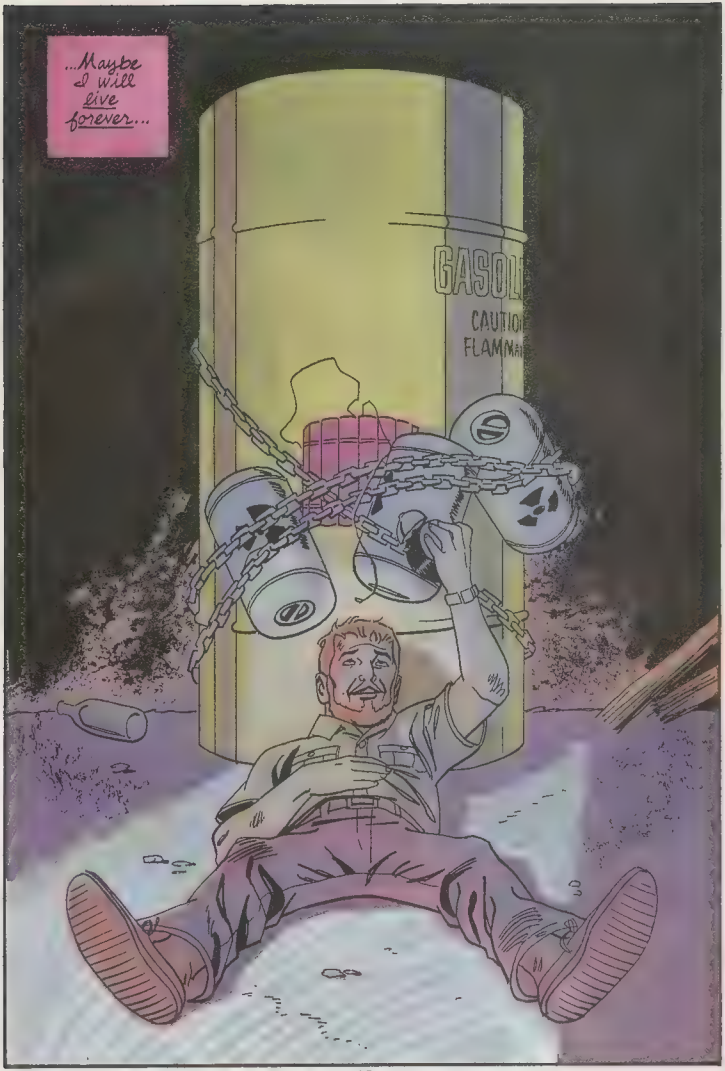
NO! NO, YOU WON'T!
BLAMM!

NO... NO! YOU STOP HIM, HERBIE! STOP HIM!
IF HE HURTS ME, IT'S YOUR FAULT! I'LL HATE YOU! I'LL HATE YOU!




NOW, FRIEND, WE'LL JUST WAIT FOR THE STATE POLICE TO FIND US... AND YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT THIS "SECRET THING"...
WUKK!
I GOT HIM! DID I DO IT RIGHT, DAD?
SURE DID, SON! I LOVE YOU AGAIN! WE'LL TAKE HIS JEEP!
They are like some awful parody of Jonny and me... Have I ever really told Jonny he doesn't have to earn my love? God, I hope so...
They won't get far. I called the state troopers before I left, and a ton of people are looking for him...but no one is looking for his secret thing...
NO... OH, LORD... NO, NO...
GASOLINE
CAUTION
Each large building would have had a storm cellar... It was the only place he had to hide it... and on the fifth try...

I SMELL GASOLINE. HE MUST'VE PLANNED THIS FOR MONTHS. A LAST STAND... FINAL DEFIANCE... SOMETHING...
NO WAY TO TELL WHEN HE SET IT TO GO OFF... WOULD HAVE GIVEN HIMSELF TIME TO GET AWAY... BUT HOW MUCH?
THEY SAY A GALLON OF GASOLINE IN A SEALED CONTAINER EQUALS THREE STICKS OF TNT... HOW MANY GALLONS IN THIS THING? FIFTY? ONE HUNDRED?
AND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS DESERT, FIFTY MILES, ARE THE ORCHARDS AND THE VINEYARDS... AND BEYOND THAT, L.A. IF THE WIND WAS RIGHT, IT WOULD TAKE A DAY.
WIRED BY A MADMAN...BUT I THINK...I THINK THIS IS RIGHT. IF THE SPARK DOESN'T SET OFF THE FUMES WHEN I DISCONNECT IT...
IF I'M WRONG, I WON'T EVEN FEEL IT...
PNNK
...I HOPE...
TRRRIIINGG! TRRIIINNGG!

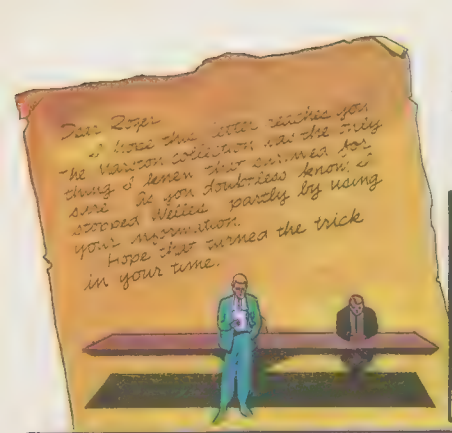

...Maybe I will live forever...
GASOL
CAUTIO
FLAMM

FROM THE JOURNAL OF BENTON QUEST, Ph.D. JANUARY 12, 1988:
Welles was killed in a gun battle with the state police. His son is in a clinic. The authorities won't let me see him. I don't think I have to... There was something in his eyes...
ALL FINISHED. NOW THE ONLY QUESTION IS: WHAT TO DO WITH IT? IT HAS TO SURVIVE AND IT HAS TO REACH HIM...
I COULD LEAVE IT IN A GLASS CASE IN A MUSEUM... BUT EXHIBITS GET CHANGED...
A TIME CAPSULE? HOW WOULD HE KNOW IT'S FOR HIM?
AN UNDERSEA DEVICE OR COMPUTER ENCODING? NO, THE WORLD IS A PRETTY CHANGEABLE PLACE... ALWAYS BUFFETED BY TIME.
WHAT I NEED IS A SAFE HAVEN, A... OF COURSE!
HELLO, MR. MARSTON? YES, THIS IS BENTON QUEST... YES, THE SCIENTIST, THAT'S RIGHT...
...MR. MARSTON, I HAVE A LARGE FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU...

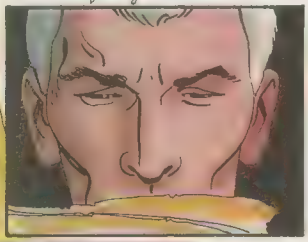
THIRTY-FIVE POINT NINE HOURS. TIME FOR COURT... MIGHT AS WELL GET THIS PASSED...
AM I WORN! BARELY GOT HOME IN TIME FOR A SHOWER AND A FACE MASSAGE... NONE OF THE LAW TAPES GIVE ME A LOOPHOLE. THIS IS IT.
AND YOU, BENTON... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? DID YOU RUN, OR DID YOU DIE? THE SOLE CHOICE ANY OF US HAS, REALLY.
BREAK-FAST! BREAKFAST FIXINGS HERE!

HEY, STRIDER! DON'T PASS WITHOUT SOME BREAKFAST, YOU'LL GET STOMACH STATIC! HAVE AN ORANGE!
SORRY, NO TIME. I... ORANGES? YOU HAVE ORANGES?
SURE... ALWAYS HAD 'EM... ALWAYS WILL! YOU INTERESTED?
WHERE DID YOU GET THOSE ORANGES?
WHERE I ALWAYS DO...THE MARKET. NICE FRESH SHIPMENT TODAY... TEN CENTS APIECE. FROM CALIFORNIA.
HERE, I'LL TAKE SIX. KEEP THE CHANGE!
CHEE, STRIDER... DANKEBIEN!
YOU DID IT, BENTON! I DON'T KNOW HOW... BUT YOU DID IT! I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO REMEMBERS... AND THAT'S ALL RIGHT, TOO!

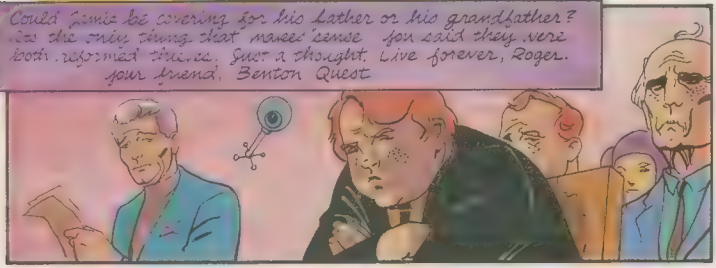
NOW, IF THERE WERE ONLY SOME MIRACLE TO SAVE ME! IN TEN CENTI-HOURS MY CAREER WILL BE OVER... OH, WELL, "EASY COME, EASY GO."
COUNSELOR? COUNSELOR? WOULD YOU CARE TO BEGIN?
YES, YOUR HONOR. MY CLIENT WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE HIS PLEA...
ROGER... WAIT!
UH... WE CRAVE THE COURT'S INDULGENCE, YOUR HONOR.
WE FOUND THIS IN THE MARSTON PAPERS, ROGER... IT SAYS, "NEW EVIDENCE FOR THE TRIAL OF JAMIE WELLES... JANUARY 6, 2312... BRING TO ROGER BANNON IMMEDIATELY!"
BUT... THESE PAPERS MUST BE THREE HUNDRED YEARS OLD! I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
I HOPE I DO...
YOUR HONOR, THIS COULD BE TERRIBLY IMPORTANT FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR PLEA. COULD I HAVE A SHORT RECESS?
VERY WELL, BUT READ QUICKLY, MR. BANNON.
COURT IS IN RECESS FOR ONE METRIC HOUR.

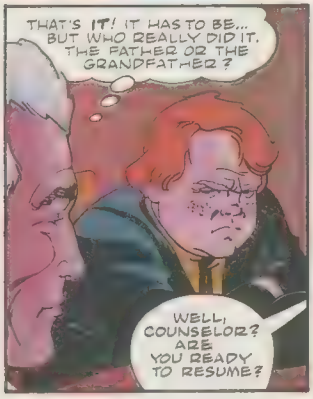


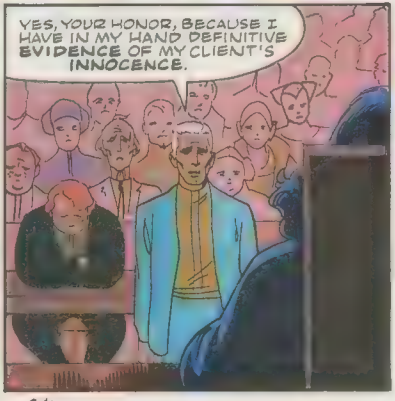
This may not help you, but Welles was mentally disturbed. He had his son convinced that he had to sacrifice everything.... his life, his will... to him. Sometimes that sort of thinking is passed on from father to son... for generations.

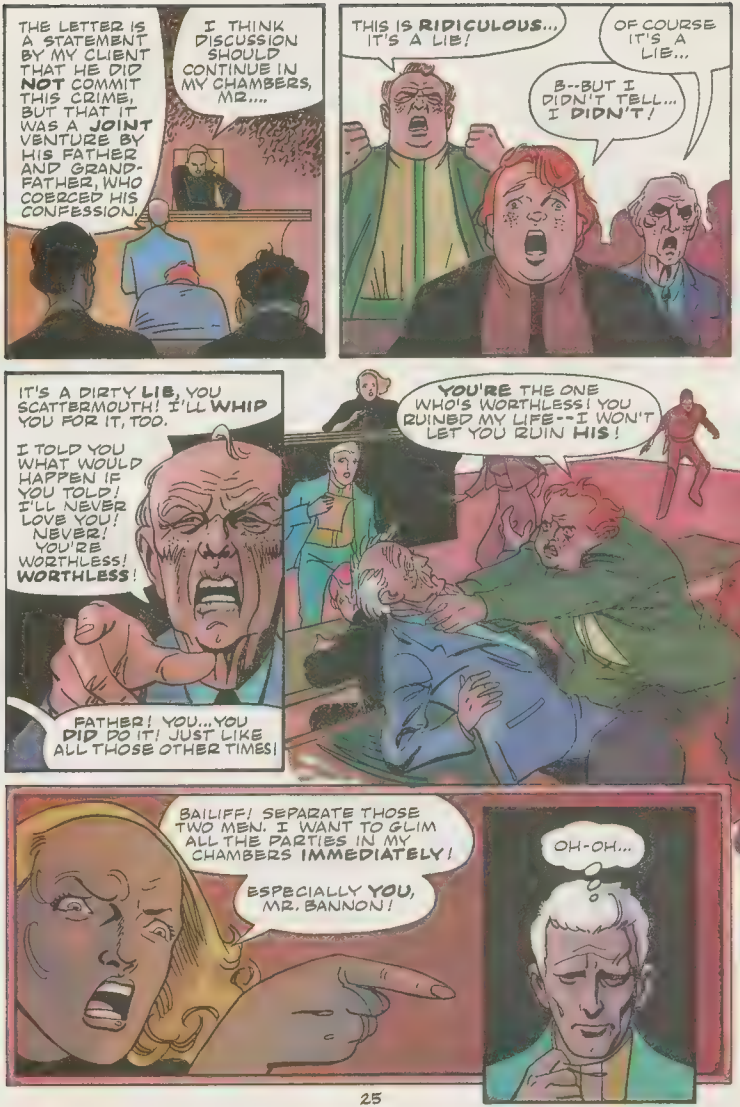


Could Jamie be covering for his father or his grandfather? Is the only thing that makes sense. You said they were both reformed thieves. Just a thought. Live forever, Roger.
your friend, Benton Quest



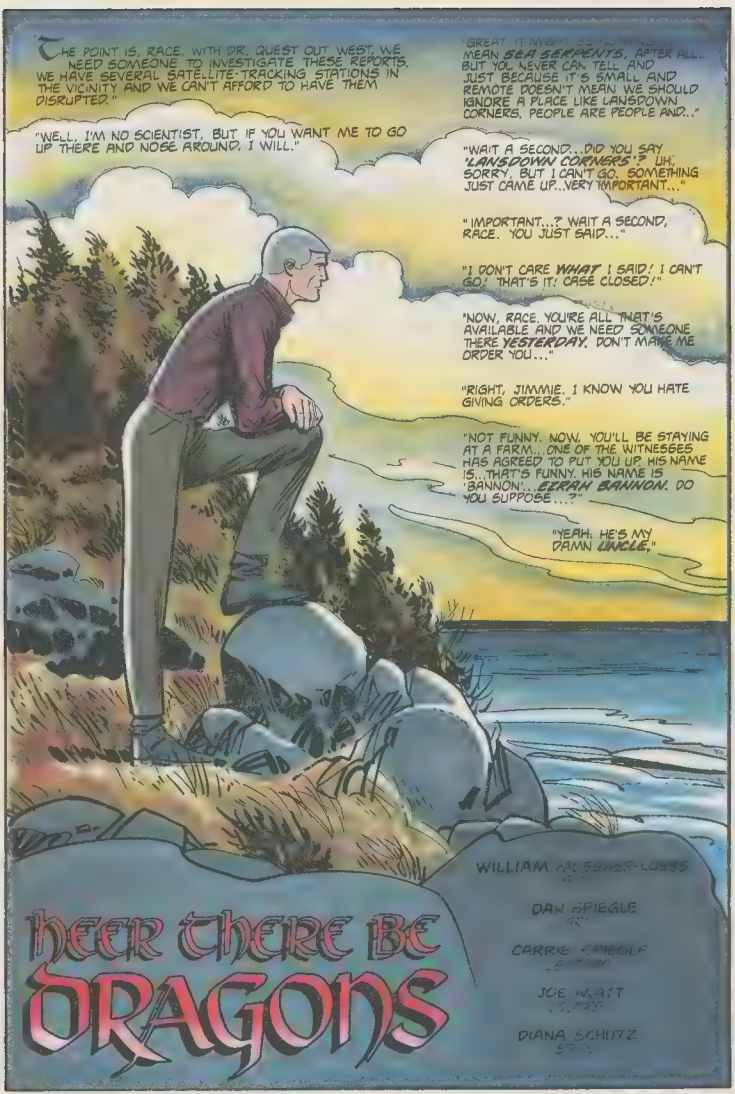





THE LETTER IS A STATEMENT BY MY CLIENT THAT HE DID **NOT** COMMIT THIS CRIME, BUT THAT IT WAS A **JOINT** VENTURE BY HIS FATHER AND GRANDFATHER, WHO COERCED HIS CONFESSION.
I THINK DISCUSSION SHOULD CONTINUE IN MY CHAMBERS, MR....
THIS IS **RIDICULOUS**... IT'S A LIE!
OF COURSE IT'S A LIE...
B--BUT I DIDN'T TELL... I **DIDN'T**!
IT'S A DIRTY **LIE**, YOU SCATTERMOUTH! I'LL **WHIP** YOU FOR IT, TOO.
I TOLD YOU WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU TOLD! I'LL NEVER LOVE YOU! NEVER! YOU'RE WORTHLESS! **WORTHLESS**!
FATHER! YOU...YOU **DID** DO IT! JUST LIKE ALL THOSE OTHER TIMES!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S WORTHLESS! YOU RUINED MY LIFE--I WON'T LET YOU RUIN **HIS**!
BAILIFF! SEPARATE THOSE TWO MEN. I WANT TO GLIM ALL THE PARTIES IN MY CHAMBERS **IMMEDIATELY**!
ESPECIALLY **YOU**, MR. BANNON!
OH-OH...

WELL, EVEN IF SHE CITES ME FOR CONTEMPT, IT WAS WORTH IT. AND BETTER THAN THE MIND-SCAN!
I WONDER IF THIS MEANS THAT TWO STRANGERS WHO MEET IN THE NIGHT CAN UNDO BOTH FATE AND TIME...OR IF IT ONLY MEANS I AM CAPABLE OF EXTRAORDINARY HALLUCINATIONS...?
IN ANY CASE, I'LL NEVER FORGET IT. DANKEBIEN, BENTON.
DANKEBIEN.
END

Illustration by Dick Ayers and Tom Reilly

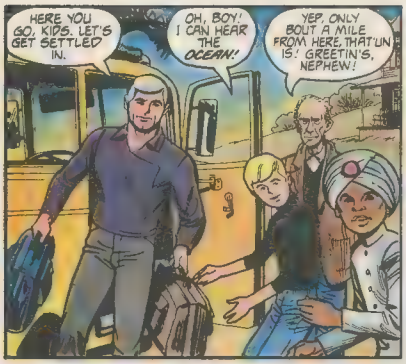

THE POINT IS, RACE, WITH DR. QUEST OUT WEST, WE NEED SOMEONE TO INVESTIGATE THESE REPORTS. WE HAVE SEVERAL SATELLITE-TRACKING STATIONS IN THE VICINITY AND WE CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE THEM DISRUPTED."
"WELL, I'M NO SCIENTIST, BUT IF YOU WANT ME TO GO UP THERE AND NOSE AROUND, I WILL."
"GREAT. IT MIGHT BE, I MEAN SEA SERPENTS, AFTER ALL... BUT YOU NEVER CAN TELL. AND JUST BECAUSE IT'S SMALL AND REMOTE DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULD IGNORE A PLACE LIKE LANSDOWN CORNERS. PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE AND..."
"WAIT A SECOND...DID YOU SAY 'LANSDOWN CORNERS'? UH, SORRY, BUT I CAN'T GO. SOMETHING JUST CAME UP...VERY IMPORTANT..."
"IMPORTANT...? WAIT A SECOND, RACE. YOU JUST SAID..."
"I DON'T CARE WHAT I SAID! I CAN'T GO! THAT'S IT! CASE CLOSED!"
"NOW, RACE, YOU'RE ALL THAT'S AVAILABLE AND WE NEED SOMEONE THERE YESTERDAY. DON'T MAKE ME ORDER YOU..."
"RIGHT, JIMMIE. I KNOW YOU HATE GIVING ORDERS."
"NOT FUNNY. NOW, YOU'LL BE STAYING AT A FARM...ONE OF THE WITNESSES HAS AGREED TO PUT YOU UP. HIS NAME IS...THAT'S FUNNY. HIS NAME IS 'BANNON'...EZRAH BANNON. DO YOU SUPPOSE...?"
"YEAH. HE'S MY DAMN UNCLE."
WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS
DAN SPIEGLE
CARRIE SPIEGLE
JOE WAIT
DIANA SCHUTZ
HEER THERE BE DRAGONS

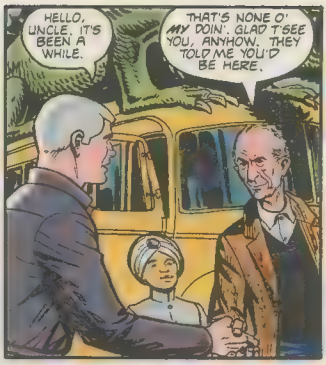
RACE! THE MAN SAYS WE CAN HAVE „OBSTER HERE EVERY DAY' AND WE CAN GO SAILING AND SWIMMING AND..
RACE? S THERE A PROBLEM?
NAH, KID... NOT REALLY. I WAS JUST THINKING...SEE, UNCLE EZ AND I DON'T GET ALONG...
"AFTER MY FOLKS DIED, I CAME TO LIVE WITH UNCLE EZ. HE RAN A HOME FOR FOSTER KIDS. IT REPLACED THE INCOME HIS FARM DIDN'T MAKE.
"HE MADE JS „IVE IN THE BASEMENT...WE HAD A SEPARATE REFRIGERATOR AND ONLY THE CHEAPEST FOOD! AND NEVER ENOUGH.'
THIS WAY. 'OU WON'T MESS UP MY HOUSE... AN' 'OU WON'T EAT ME OUTTA HOUSE AN' HOME.'
2

"HE WAS OBSESSED WITH THE IDEA THAT WE'D STEAL FROM HIM. WHEN WE CAME BACK FROM SCHOOL, THE DOORS WOULD BE LOCKED UNTIL HE GOT BACK FROM WORK...EVEN IN WINTER.
"I WAS THE OLDEST...I HAD TO TAKE CARE OF THE OTHERS. ONE REALLY COLD DAY I BROKE INTO THE HOUSE...
"MY LOVING UNCLE EZ WENT CRAZY WHEN HE GOT HOME. HE HAD ME ARRESTED...THEN TRIED TO HAVE ME COMMITTED AS AN INCORRIGIBLE. OF COURSE, IT DIDN'T STICK..."
LET 'IM STAY THERE FOR A WHILE, GUS. HE'LL LEARN RESPECT FER FOLKS' PROPERTY. YOU BET HE WILL!
NOW, YOU SLEEP ON THAT, EZ. THIS'UN AIN'T A BAD KID--JUST TRYIN' T' GET OUTTA THE COLD...
YOU'LL END UP HERE Y'SELF, IF YOU DON'T EASE UP ON THEM KIDS.
I...LEFT SOON AFTER THAT. AND I'VE NEVER BEEN BACK. NEVER WANTED TO BE BACK..
BUT YOU ARE NO LONGER A BOY, RACE. PERHAPS YOUR UNCLE WILL SEE HE WAS WRONG
NOW, THERE'S A THOUGHT. MAYBE THIS IS MY CHANCE TO SETTLE SOME OLD SCORES...TURN THE TABLES A LITTLE...
RACE! HADJI! COME QUICK! LOOK WHAT'S COMING FOR US!
3

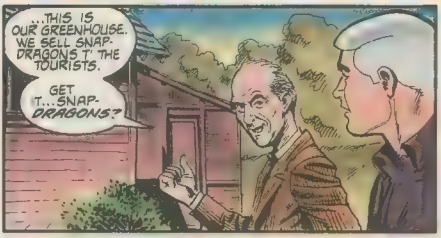
DRAGON-MOBILE
FOLLOW ME TO DRAGON COVE
WOW! THIS IS AMAZING.
YEAH, ISN'T IT WILD?
"WILD" JUST ABOUT COVERS IT.
HEY, WHITEY! THROW Y'R STUFF IN BACK AND LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON TH' ROAD!
TIMMY! TIM, IS THAT REALLY YOU?
SURE IT'S ME IN THE FLESH! I AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE'S! HOW'S BY YOU, WHITEY?
NOT BAD. YOU'RE STILL ON THE FARM?
YOU BET. I'D NEVER LEAVE TH' OLD MAN. YOU KNOW THAT.

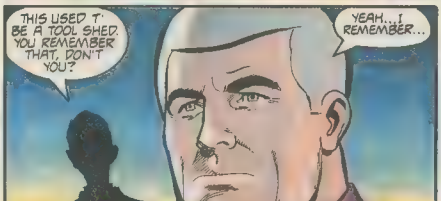
I KIND OF HOPED YOU HAD, TIM. THIS ISN'T THE LIFE YOU DESERVE.
AWW, THE FARM AIN'T SO BAD...AND THE OLD MAN, WHY, HE'S THE ONLY FATHER I'VE EVER KNOWN.
I PRACTIC'LY RUN TH' PLACE NOW. I'M A SOLID CITIZEN--AND UNCLE, WHY, HE'S A LOT MELLOWER THAN YOU REMEMBER
HE'LL HAVE TO BE A TON MELLOWER THAN I REMEMBER BEFORE I'M WILLING TO SAY HE'S CHANGED. NOTHING CHANGES AROUND HERE..
OH, MY GOD..!
SEA MONSTER RIDE
SEARCH FOR THE SEA MONSTER ONE BUCK
AIN'T IT SOMETHIN', THOUGH? I PAINTED MOST OF THE SIGNS MYSELF!
5

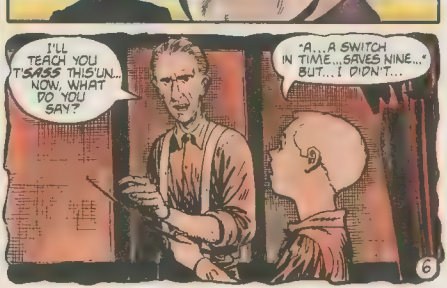

HERE YOU GO, KIDS. LET'S GET SETTLED IN.
OH, BOY! I CAN HEAR THE OCEAN!
YEP, ONLY 'BOUT A MILE FROM HERE, THAT UN IS! GREETIN'S, NEPHEW!


HELLO, UNCLE. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
THAT'S NONE O' MY DOIN'. GLAD T'SEE YOU, ANYHOW. THEY TOLD ME YOU'D BE HERE.

BEEN MAKIN' MORE OFF THIS SEA DRAGON BUSINESS THAN THE FARM EVER DID!
OVER THERE, WE'RE PUTTIN' IN ANOTHER STATUE, SO'S FOLKS C'N HAVE THEIR PICTURES TAKEN IN FRONT, AND IN HERE...


...THIS IS OUR GREENHOUSE. WE SELL SNAP-DRAGONS T' THE TOURISTS.
GET IT...SNAP-DRAGONS?


THIS USED T' BE A TOOL SHED. YOU REMEMBER THAT, DON'T YOU?
YEAH...I REMEMBER...

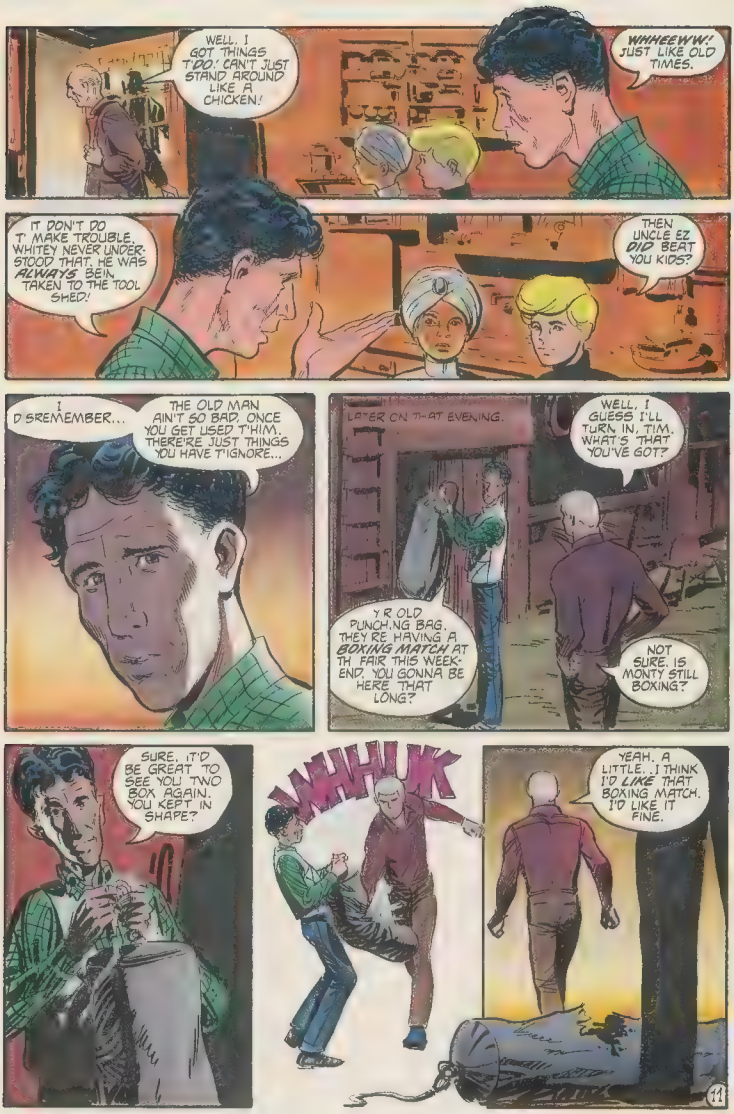

I'LL TEACH YOU T'SASS THIS'UN... NOW, WHAT DO YOU SAY?
"A...A SWITCH IN TIME...SAVES NINE..." BUT...I DIDN'T...

DON'T YOU LIE T' THIS'UN. WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN I TEACH YOU WRONG FROM RIGHT?
TH-THANK YOU, UNCLE EZ...
WHUK-WHUK-WHUK-WHUK!
THANK YOU... THANK YOU...THANK YOU...THANK YOU...
YOU OKAY, WHITEY?
YEP...I WAS JUST THINKING... THIS IS WHERE HE USED TO BEAT US, YOU KNOW... I GUESS THE MEMORIES ARE STILL PRETTY SHARP.
BEAT US? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "BEAT US"? HE NEVER LAID A HAND ON US!
OF COURSE HE DID. WE HAD TO CUT THE SWITCHES! DON'T YOU REMEMBER... "A SWITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE"?
YOU KNOW, WHITEY, YOU ALWAYS CAUSED TROUBLE BETWEEN US AND THE OLD MAN. HOPE YOU AREN'T STARTIN' THAT AGAIN!
7

...AN' THERE HE WAS! REARIN' HIS BIG SCALY HEAD OUT OF TH' SURF, HIS TEETH GLEAMIN' LIKE PICKETS!
THERE WERE RAZOR-SHARP FINS POKIN' OUT OF HIM AND HIS EYES WERE TH' EYES OF A SNAKE!
GOSH
GEE!
WHAT KEPT YOU TWO? WE WAS JUST TALKIN' ABOUT TH' FIRST TIME I SAW THAT MONSTER. SURE WAS BIG!
THAT SO...? YOU THINK IT COULD DAMAGE THE TRACKING STATION?
NO DOUBT IN MY MIND. IT'S THE SIZE OF A DERRICK! AND IT LOOKED MEAN TO ME!
RIGHT. AND DID TIM SEE THIS... THING, TOO?
WELL, NO. BUT MONTY DID.
YOU 'MEMBER MONTY WILKINS, DON'T YOU?
YEAH. I REMEMBER WE WERE ALWAYS FIGHTING...
YOU'RE TH' OLD GUY'S NEPHEW. BUT I'M TH' OLDEST NOW, SO I'M TH' BOSS! GOT IT?
NO... WAIT...!
8

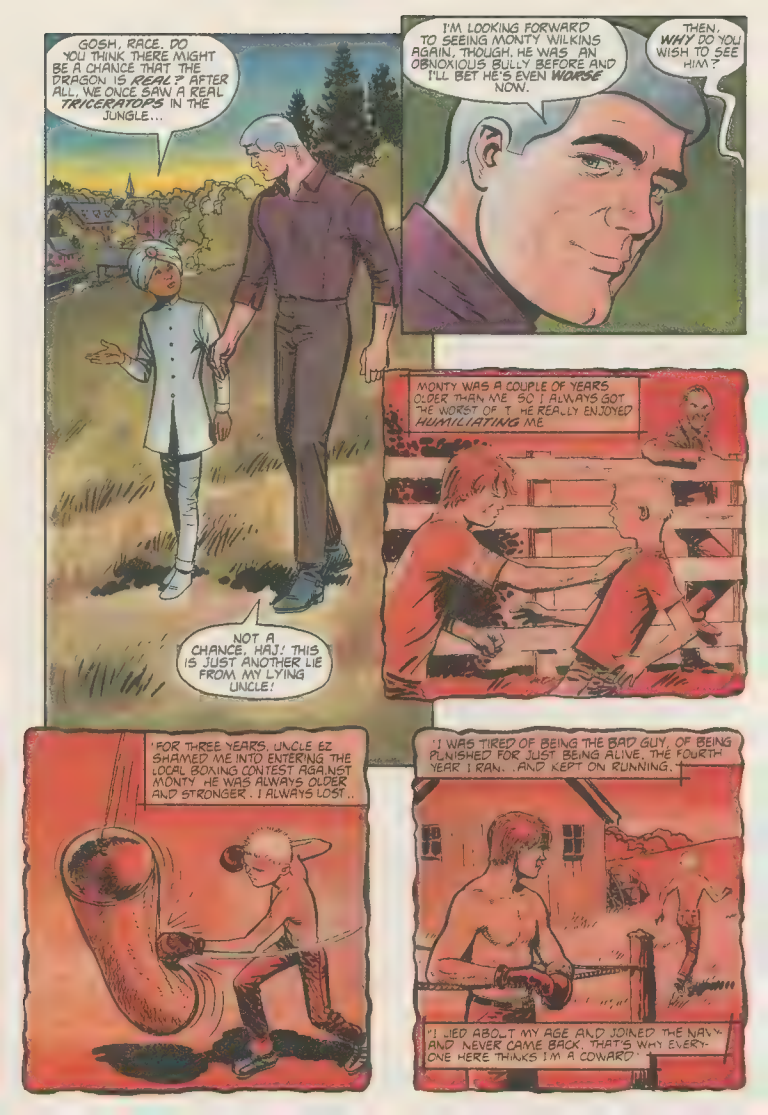
BEEN FIGHTIN' AGAIN, I SEE. CLOTHES DON'T GROW ON TREES, Y'KNOW.
B-BUT, UNCLE...IT WAS MONTY. HE KNOCKED ME DOWN AN' ROLLED ME IN THE DIRT.
SO, YOU LOST ANOTHER FIGHT, HUH? WELL WHAT D'YOU EXPECT ME T'DO ABOUT IT? YOU AIN'T GOT TH' STUFF IN YOU T' WIN!
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED I WAS WRONG."
I JUST DECIDED THAT IT'LL COST YOU A QUARTER TO GO INTO THE HOUSE. YOU WANNA ARGUE?
BUT A QUARTER'S ALL I HAVE.
THAT'S RIGHT...TAKE THE EASY WAY! Y'R YELLOW, BOY DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WAS MADE KIN T'ME!
I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU LIKED MONTY BETTER THAN ME, UNCLE.
DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'D GET THAT NOTION. I RAISED YOU, 'CAUSE WE'RE KIN.
COURSE, MONTY WAS A WINNER. GUESS THAT COUNTED FOR SOMETHING.
9

AS I REMEMBER, IT COUNTED FOR A GOOD DEAL.
YOU ALWAYS DID BLAME ME FR ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU.
WELL, I PROTECTED YOU! GUESS YOU'VE FORGOT THAT.
GUESS I HAVE. ANYWAY, I'LL TALK TO MONTY TOMORROW. I WANT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS "DRAGON" BUSINESS
'GET TO THE BOTTOM' OF IT? YOU SAY,N' I MADE THIS UP? YOU CALLIN' ME A LIAR?
I'M SAYING YOU'VE MADE A GOOD LIVING OFF THIS LEGEND, JUST LIKE YOU MADE A LIVING OUT OF US KIDS WHEN WE WERE SMALL.
NOW I MEAN TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH... NO MATTER WHAT IT IS!
THAT'S A ROTTEN THING TO SAY, WHITEY! IT REALLY IS!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT, TIM? YOU'VE BOUGHT INTO HIS CHEAP FANTASY, BUT I HAVEN'T. YOU'D BETTER WAKE UP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
THAT'S TH THANKS I GET FR GIVIN' UP MY FARM T RAISE A BUNCH OF UNGRATEFUL WHELPS. GUESS I SHOULD'VE EXPECTED AS MUCH.
SLAM


WELL, I GOT THINGS T'DO! CAN'T JUST STAND AROUND LIKE A CHICKEN!
WHHEEWW! JUST LIKE OLD TIMES.
IT DON'T DO T' MAKE TROUBLE, WHITEY NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT. HE WAS ALWAYS BEIN TAKEN TO THE TOOL SHED!
THEN UNCLE EZ DID BEAT YOU KIDS?
I D'REMEMBER...
THE OLD MAN AIN'T SO BAD ONCE YOU GET USED T'HIM. THERE'RE JUST THINGS YOU HAVE T'IGNORE...
LATER ON THAT EVENING.
WELL, I GUESS I'LL TURN IN, TIM. WHAT'S THAT YOU'VE GOT?
Y'R OLD PUNCHING BAG. THEY'RE HAVING A BOXING MATCH AT TH' FAIR THIS WEEKEND. YOU GONNA BE HERE THAT LONG?
NOT SURE. IS MONTY STILL BOXING?
SURE, IT'D BE GREAT TO SEE YOU TWO BOX AGAIN. YOU KEPT IN SHAPE?
WHHUK
YEAH. A LITTLE. I THINK I'D LIKE THAT BOXING MATCH. I'D LIKE IT FINE.
11

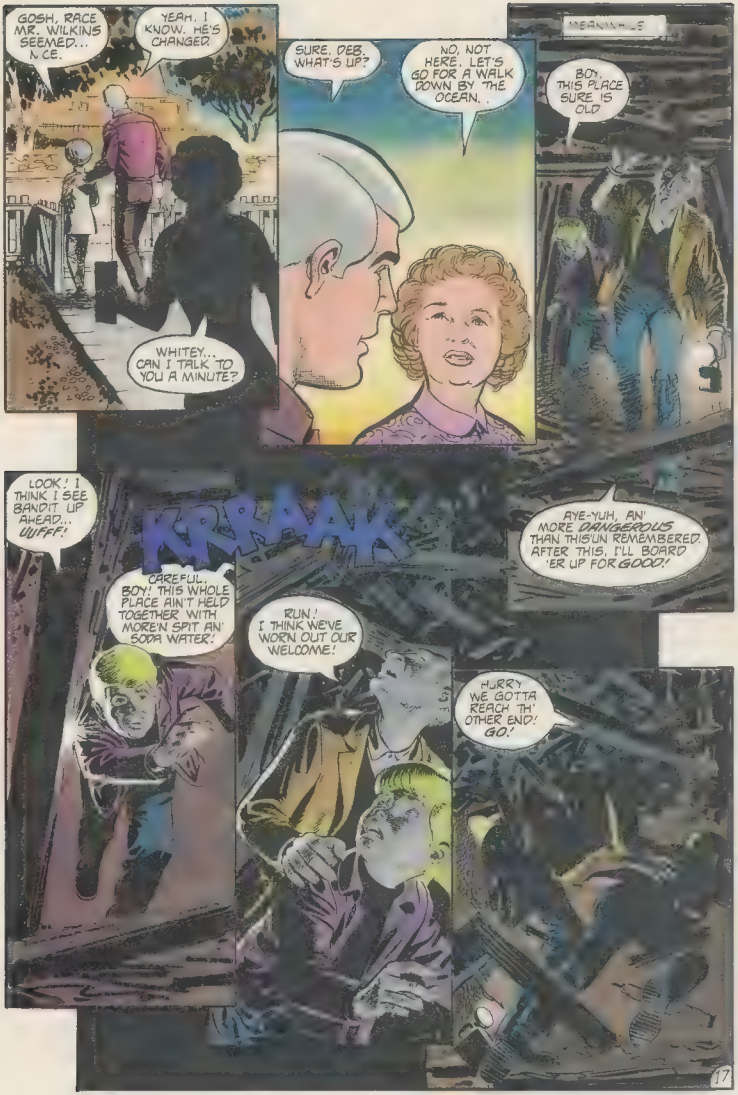
THE NEXT MORNING
COME ON, BOY! LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND YOU A BALL TO CHASE.
COME TO MOCK AT THIS'UN, HAVE YOU?
NO, SIR. TIM WAS TELLING US THAT THIS PLACE USED TO HAVE PIRATES AND SMUGGLERS AND INDIANS... AND WE WERE LOOKING FOR TRACKS OR SOMETHING.
BLASTED WIRE'S ALWAYS SHORTIN' ON ME... WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE?
HA HA HA! SMUGGLERS! PIRATES! THERE AIN'T BEEN ANY F'R HUNDREDS O' YEARS IN FACT, THERE'S ONLY ONE SOUVENIR LEFT OF 'EM...
CRUUMMP
YIPE!
OH-OH! AN' IT SOUNDS LIKE Y'R POOCH FOUND IT!
COULD BE HE TRIED T' SQUEEZE THROUGH AND TH' DOOR SHIFTED.
BUT S HE ALL RIGHT? WHERE DOES IT LEAD?

IT HEADS OUT T' TH' SEA. IT'S AN OLD SMUGGLERS' TUNNEL.
WE'VE GOT TO HURRY! BANDIT COULD GET LOST OR SOMETHING!
IT'S ABOUT TWO MILES THIS WAY T' TH' SEA. I CLOSED UP THE DOOR YEARS AGO, 'CAUSE MONTY AN' TIM GOT LOST IN HERE ONCE.
I ALWAYS FIGURED WHITEY LOCKED 'EM IN!
THAT'S A HORRIBLE THING TO SAY! RACE WOULDN'T DO THAT!
HE'S SAVED MY LIFE AND MY DAD'S LIFE! THERE'VE BEEN LOTS OF TIMES WHEN HE COULD HAVE SAVED HIMSELF, BUT HE STAYED WITH US.
I'VE SEEN HIM KNOCK OUT FOUR MEN WITH HIS BARE HANDS!
THAT'S NOT THE BOY THIS 'UN KNEW.
MAYBE YOU DIDN'T REALLY KNOW HIM.

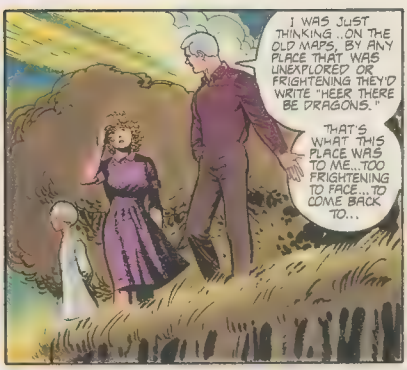

GOSH, RACE. DO YOU THINK THERE MIGHT BE A CHANCE THAT THE DRAGON IS *REAL*? AFTER ALL, WE ONCE SAW A REAL *TRICERATOPS* IN THE JUNGLE...
NOT A CHANCE, HAJ! THIS IS JUST ANOTHER LIE FROM MY LYING UNCLE!
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING MONTY WILKINS AGAIN, THOUGH. HE WAS AN OBNOXIOUS BULLY BEFORE AND I'LL BET HE'S EVEN *WORSE* NOW.
THEN, *WHY* DO YOU WISH TO SEE HIM?
MONTY WAS A COUPLE OF YEARS OLDER THAN ME SO I ALWAYS GOT THE WORST OF IT. HE REALLY ENJOYED *HUMILIATING* ME.
'FOR THREE YEARS, UNCLE EZ SHAMED ME INTO ENTERING THE LOCAL BOXING CONTEST AGAINST MONTY. HE WAS ALWAYS OLDER AND STRONGER. I ALWAYS LOST..
'I WAS TIRED OF BEING THE BAD GUY, OF BEING PUNISHED FOR JUST BEING ALIVE. THE FOURTH YEAR I RAN. AND KEPT ON RUNNING.
'I LIED ABOUT MY AGE AND JOINED THE NAVY AND NEVER CAME BACK. THAT'S WHY EVERYONE HERE THINKS I'M A COWARD.'

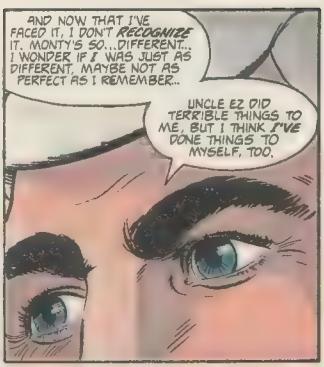
BUT THINGS HAVE CHANGED. YES, I THINK MR. MONTY WILKINS IS IN FOR A BIG SURPRISE!
MONTY WILKINS...? YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER ME. BUT.
WHITEY WHITEY BANNON
BOY. AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU, BUDDY! SURE AM!
DEBBY, THIS IS WHITEY BANNON. WHITEY, YOU REMEMBER DEBBY MASON, DON'TCHA?
HI, WHITEY. MONTY'S ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT YOU. LET'S HAVE SOME ICED TEA AND GET REACQUAINTED.
HERE YA GO. HADJI. DOUBLE SUGAR RIGHT?
YES, SIR!
...SO WE DECIDED TO BUY THE VIDEO STORE AND WE'VE BEEN RUNNING IT FOR TWO YEARS.
I THINK MONTY LIKES MOVIES EVEN MORE THAN HE LIKES EATING!
15

AW, DON'T TEASE, DEB. I STILL WORK OUT AND WORK ON THE FARM AFTER CLOSING TIME. I'M IN DECENT SHAPE.
RACE AN' I ARE GOING TO GIVE 'EM A REAL SHOW AT THE FAIR THIS WEEKEND, AREN'T WE, PAL?
LMM... SURE.
YOU KNOW, MONTY, I NEVER THOUGHT YOU LIKED ME WHEN WE WERE KIDS... YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO FIGHT ME.
FUNNY THING, I DID. THE OLD MAN SEEMED TO LIKE ME BETTER WHEN I PICKED ON YOU, AND I DIDN'T HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO.
NOT A GOOD REASON, HUH? I GUESS I WAS A PRIME JERK, PAL. THIS MATCH WILL GIVE YOU ONE LAST SHOT AT ME, HUH?
SURE, MONTY. THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, ANYWAY.
BUT I'VE GOT TO ASK...DID YOU REALLY SEE THAT SEA DRAGON?
WELL... I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING IN THE FOG. AND THE OLD MAN GOT REAL EXCITED AND SAID IT WAS A SEA MONSTER.
IF I DENIED IT, HE'D'VE LOOKED LIKE A FOOL.
HE WAS ABOUT TO LOSE THE FARM AND HE NEEDED A GIMMICK TO KEEP IT GOING.
I THINK HE HALF BELIEVES IT HIMSELF NOW.
I THOUGHT IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THANKS MONTY.

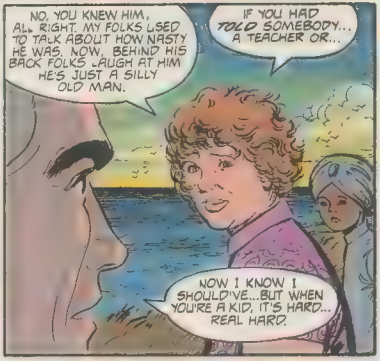

GOSH, RACE MR. WILKINS SEEMED... NICE.
YEAH. I KNOW. HE'S CHANGED.
WHITEY... CAN I TALK TO YOU A MINUTE?
SURE, DEB. WHAT'S UP?
NO. NOT HERE. LET'S GO FOR A WALK DOWN BY THE OCEAN. .
MEANWHILE
BOY, THIS PLACE SURE IS OLD
AYE-YUH, AN' MORE DANGEROUS THAN THIS'UN REMEMBERED. AFTER THIS, I'LL BOARD 'ER UP FOR GOOD!
LOOK! I THINK I SEE BANDIT UP AHEAD... UUFFF!
KRRAAAK
CAREFUL, BOY! THIS WHOLE PLACE AIN'T HELD TOGETHER WITH MORE'N SPIT AN' SODA WATER!
RUN! I THINK WE'VE WORN OUT OUR WELCOME!
HURRY WE GOTTA REACH TH' OTHER END! GO!

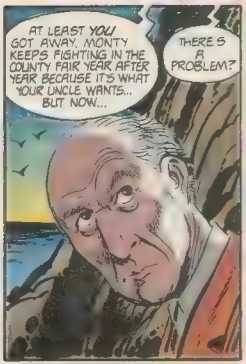
UNCLE EZ!
GET TH' HELL OUT, KID! THE WHOLE PLACE IS COMIN' DOWN!
RACE TAUGHT ME NEVER TO LEAVE A FRIEND BEHIND! YOU'VE GOT TO TRY, UNCLE EZ! PUSH!
I-IT WORKS! I CAN MOVE!
THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE RACE TAUGHT ME.
IT'S BANDIT! HE'S SAFE!
YOU'D HARDLY KNOW THERE WAS A TUNNEL HERE.
LEAST YOU WON'T HAVE TO BOARD IT UP NOW..
LOOK AT THIS. IT'S SOME KIND OF SKULL!
RECKON IS. BUT
WHAT IS IT, WHITEY? YOU LOOK SO SAD.


I WAS JUST THINKING..ON THE OLD MAPS, BY ANY PLACE THAT WAS UNEXPLORED OR FRIGHTENING THEY'D WRITE "HEER THERE BE DRAGONS."
THAT'S WHAT THIS PLACE WAS TO ME...TOO FRIGHTENING TO FACE...TO COME BACK TO...


AND NOW THAT I'VE FACED IT, I DON'T RECOGNIZE IT. MONTY'S SO...DIFFERENT... I WONDER IF I WAS JUST AS DIFFERENT, MAYBE NOT AS PERFECT AS I REMEMBER..
UNCLE EZ DID TERRIBLE THINGS TO ME, BUT I THINK I'VE DONE THINGS TO MYSELF, TOO.

YOU KNOW, I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER YOU FROM SCHOOL...HOW MUCH ELSE DID I MISS 'CAUSE I WAS SO BUSY HATING MY UNCLE...?
MAYBE I DIDN'T KNOW HIM EITHER


NO. YOU KNEW HIM, ALL RIGHT. MY FOLKS USED TO TALK ABOUT HOW NASTY HE WAS. NOW, BEHIND HIS BACK, FOLKS LAUGH AT HIM HE'S JUST A SILLY OLD MAN.
IF YOU HAD TOLD SOMEBODY... A TEACHER OR...
NOW I KNOW I SHOULD'VE...BUT WHEN YOU'RE A KID, IT'S HARD... REAL HARD.


AT LEAST YOU GOT AWAY. MONTY KEEPS FIGHTING IN THE COUNTY FAIR YEAR AFTER YEAR BECAUSE IT'S WHAT YOUR UNCLE WANTS... BUT NOW...
THERE'S A PROBLEM?

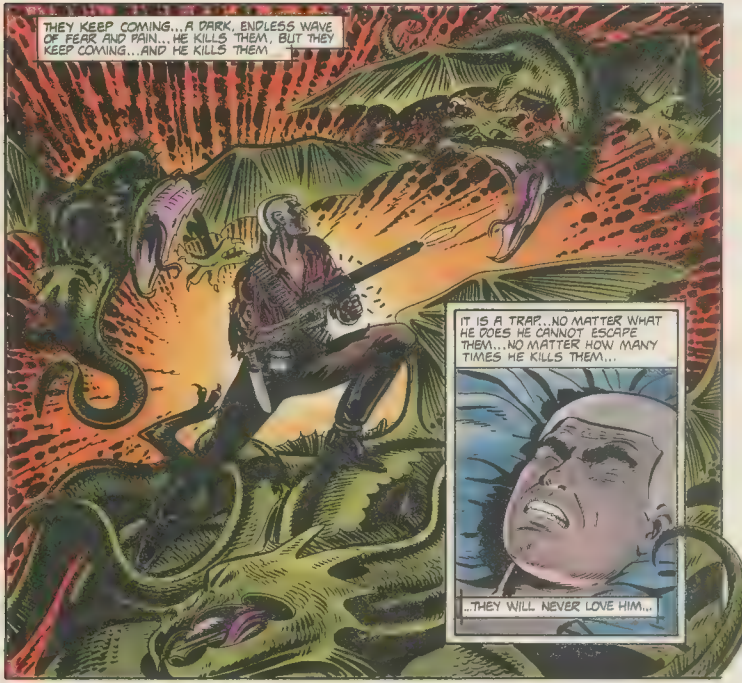
HE CAME HOME WITH THESE A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO. HE DOESN'T KNOW I SAW THEM.
HMMM. MIGRAINE HEADACHES, LOSS OF HAND-EYE COORDINATION. C-T SCAN REVEALS ANEURYSM... INOPERABLE..."

THAT MEANS HE SHOULDN'T FIGHT ANYMORE, DOESN'T IT?
YEAH...THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS... HE SHOULDN'T FIGHT ANYMORE...

IT'D KILL MONTY IF ANYONE KNEW ABOUT THIS.
DON'T WORRY, DEB. I WON'T TELL.
THAT AFTERNOON...
THERE YOU TWO ARE! SEEN JONNY AN' TH' OLD MAN ANY-WHERE'S?
NO...HAVE THEY NOT RETURNED?
NO, BUT LEN AND DALE STOPPED BY TO TALK TO WHITEY 'BOUT THE COUNTY FAIR.
WE JUST CAME FROM MONTY WILKINS' PLACE. HE ACTED REAL RELUCTANT TO BOX IN THE CHARITY MATCH THIS YEAR!
DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOT INTO HIM. HE ALWAYS FIGHTS!
NEVER FIGURED HIM FOR A COWARD. WONDER WHAT'S WRONG...
WELL, WHITEY'S UP F'R IT, AIN'T YOU, WHITEY?
SORRY, TIM. I CHANGED MY MIND.

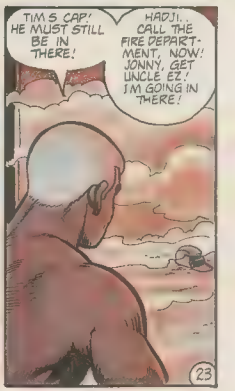
CHANGED Y'R MIND? WHY?
WELL... I GOT A LOOK AT MONTY TONIGHT AND HE'S IN PRETTY GOOD SHAPE. AND..
OH.. I SEE
SEE I HAVEN'T REALLY BEEN FEELING WELL... AND I HAVE TO GET ON WITH MY WORK HERE AND...
SAME OL' WHITEY.. RUN AWAY, RUN AWAY..
SO SCARED OF A BEATIN', YOU'LL DO ANYTHIN'.
BUT, WHITEY.. WHY?
... I DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN MYSELF TO YOU.
MY GOD. THE OLD MAN WAS RIGHT ABOUT YOU...

IT'S JUST LIKE YOU ALWAYS SAID.. WHITEY IS A COWARD. I NEVER LISTENED TO YOU, BUT YOU SURE WERE RIGHT! HE'S NOTHING BUT A--
SHUT UP, TIM. JUST SHUT UP.
NIGHT FALLS, SILENT AND DEEP...
"SHUT UP, TIM... FIX THAT, TIM... GO HERE, TIM..." BUT WHEN THEY NEED SOMEBODY TO COME OUT EVERY NIGHT AN' CHECK TH' SUPPLIES... WHY THEN...
...THEY-- OH-OH...
GOTTA GET... HELP... COP-COPS QUICK!
22

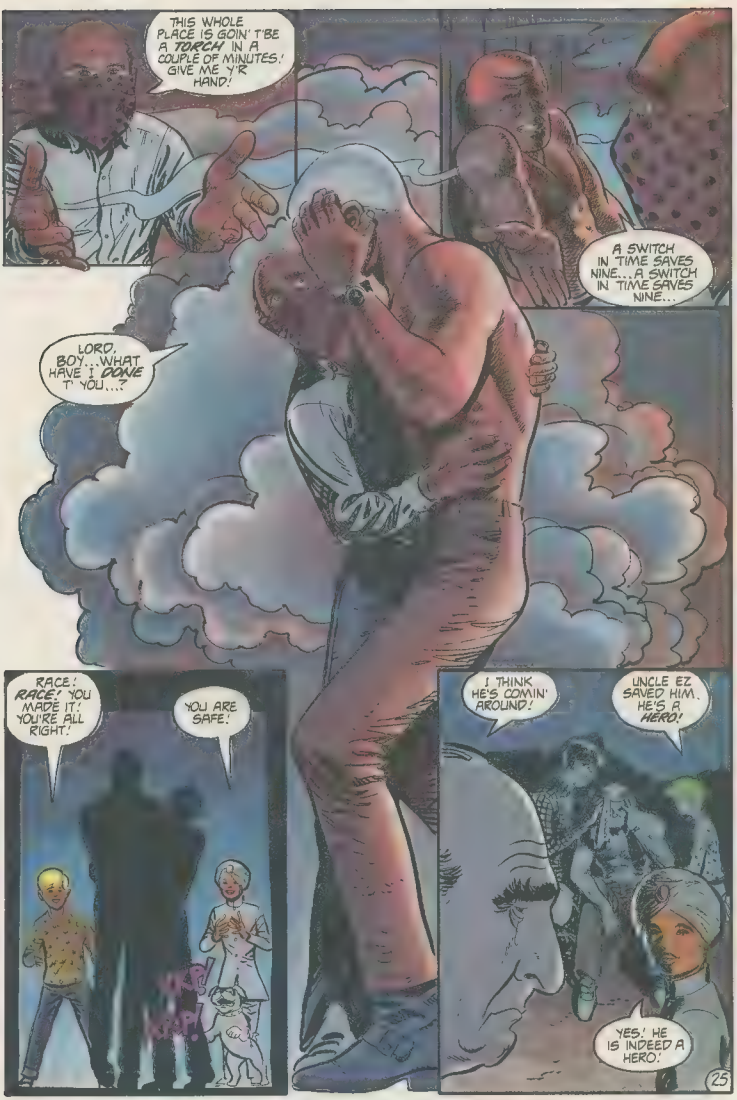

THEY KEEP COMING...A DARK, ENDLESS WAVE OF FEAR AND PAIN...HE KILLS THEM, BUT THEY KEEP COMING...AND HE KILLS THEM.
IT IS A TRAP...NO MATTER WHAT HE DOES HE CANNOT ESCAPE THEM...NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE KILLS THEM...
...THEY WILL NEVER LOVE HIM...

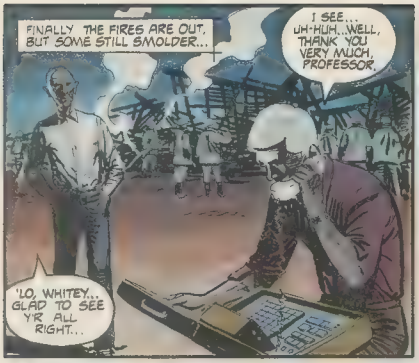
WAKE UP, RACE! WAKE UP! BANDIT SMELLS SMOKE!
WHA...? OOOOH, WHAT A DREAM...
SMOKE? DID YOU SAY SMOKE?

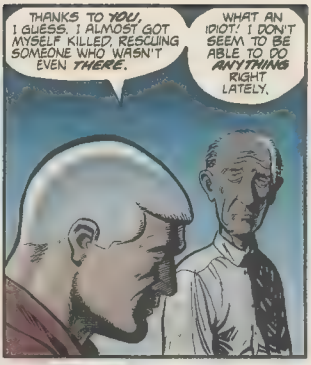
LOOK, RACE! THERE IT IS!
LOOKS PLENTY BAD. BETTER STAY BACK...THAT SMOKE'S FROM BURNING PLASTIC. IT'S TOXIC!

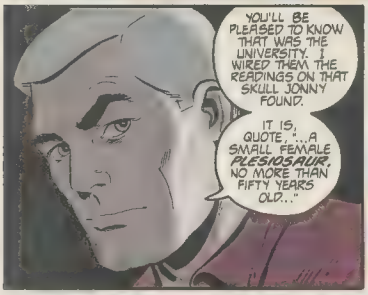

TIM'S CAP! HE MUST STILL BE IN THERE!
HADJI.. CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, NOW! JONNY, GET UNCLE EZ! I'M GOING IN THERE!

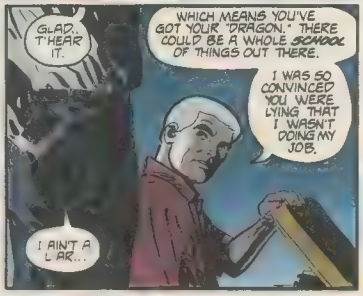
THE CLOUDS OF POISON HANG AROUND HIM LIKE THE BREATH OF A DRAGON...HIS BRAIN SWIMS...HE IS ALMOST BLIND...
TIM...?COFF-COFF!...TIM! BLAST IT! ANSWER ME!
NOW HE HAS LOST THE WAY OUT...BUT HE KNOWS THE DRAGON IS REAL. ITS WINGS ARE SMOTHERING HIM...HE CAN SEE THE FLICKER OF ITS YELLOW EYES...THE DRAGON IS EVERYWHERE...
EVERYTHING IS SPINNING AROUND...ANOTHER TRICK OF THE DRAGON...
BUT HE CAN'T FIGHT T...HE'S LOST HIS GUN...
GET... ?COFF?...AWAY FROM...ME... I'LL...KILL...
CAN'T SEE... ?COFF-COFF?...TIM! GOT TO...BREATHE... ?COFF?...?COFF-COFF?
HE IS YOUNG AND HE CANNOT FIGHT...
NO...NO... PLEASE... NO...
WHITEY! C'N YOU HEAR ME, BOY...?
IT'S UNCLE EZ, BOY. I'VE COME FOR YOU!
NO... NO...
AND THE PAIN IN HIS HEAD BLINDS H M...AND FOR ONE TERRIBLE MOMENT HE IS EIGHT...AND THE DRAGON STANDS BEFORE HIM.
NO! PLEASE DON'T HURT ME!


THIS WHOLE PLACE IS GOIN' T'BE A TORCH IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES. GIVE ME Y'R HAND!
A SWITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE... A SWITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE...
LORD, BOY... WHAT HAVE I DONE T' YOU...?
RACE! RACE! YOU MADE IT! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
YOU ARE SAFE!
YIP! YIP!
I THINK HE'S COMIN' AROUND!
UNCLE EZ SAVED HIM. HE'S A HERO!
YES. HE IS INDEED A HERO.
25

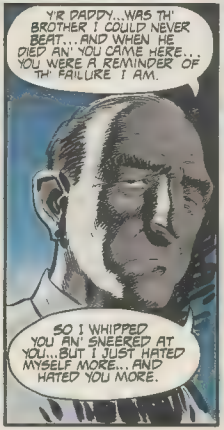

FINALLY THE FIRES ARE OUT, BUT SOME STILL SMOLDER...
I SEE... UH-HUH...WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH, PROFESSOR.
'LO, WHITEY... GLAD TO SEE Y'R ALL RIGHT...


THANKS TO YOU, I GUESS. I ALMOST GOT MYSELF KILLED, RESCUING SOMEONE WHO WASN'T EVEN THERE.
WHAT AN IDIOT! I DON'T SEEM TO BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING RIGHT LATELY.

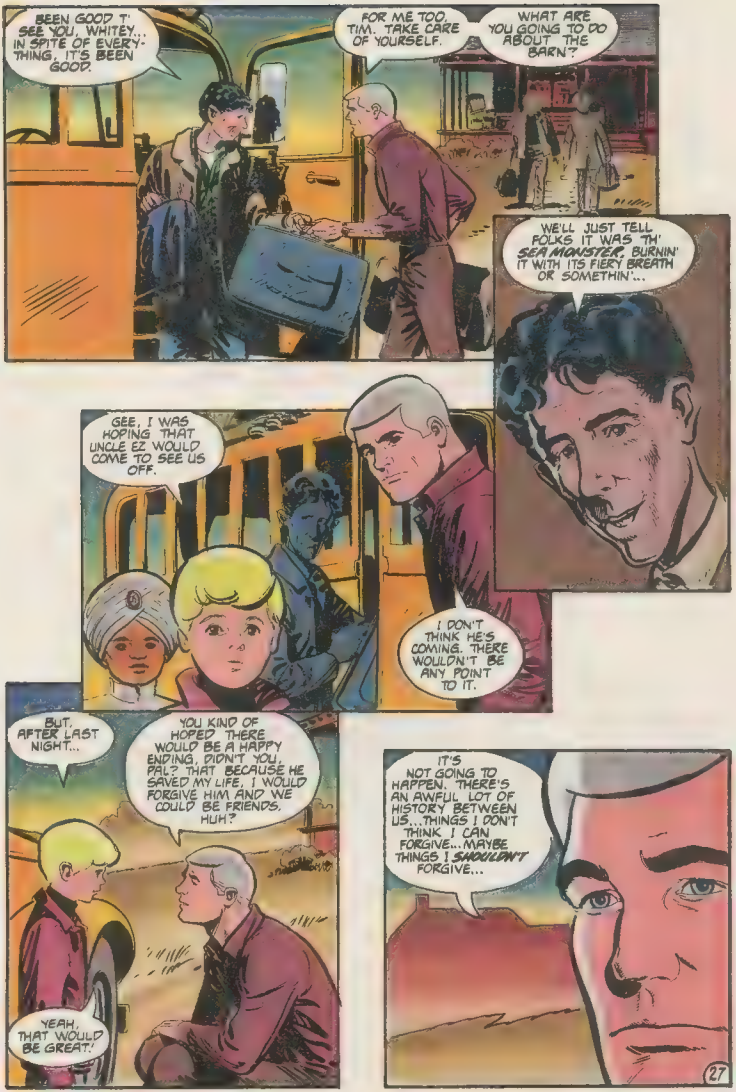

YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT WAS THE UNIVERSITY. I WIRED THEM THE READINGS ON THAT SKULL JONNY FOUND.
IT IS, QUOTE, "...A SMALL FEMALE PLESIOSAUR, NO MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS OLD..."


GLAD. T'HEAR IT.
WHICH MEANS YOU'VE GOT YOUR "DRAGON." THERE COULD BE A WHOLE SCHOOL OF THINGS OUT THERE.
I WAS SO CONVINCED YOU WERE LYING THAT I WASN'T DOING MY JOB.
I AIN'T A LIAR...

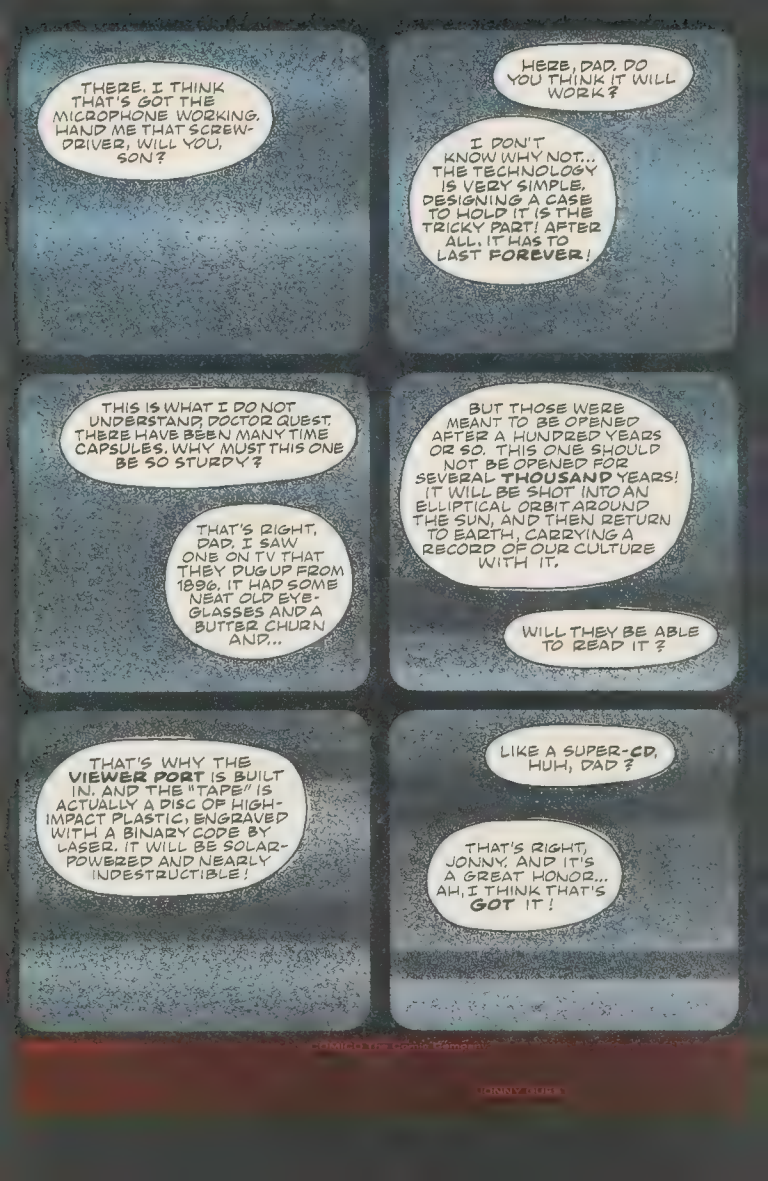
...BUT I'M EVERY OTHER KIND OF BAD THING A MAN COULD BE. I'VE BEEN CRUEL AND HARD TOWARD YOU, BOY... AND YOU RAISED YOURSELF T'BE A BETTER MAN THAN I DESERVE.
YOU AIN'T TH' FOOL. THIS'UN IS...
UNCLE EZ?


Y'R DADDY...WAS TH' BROTHER I COULD NEVER BEAT... AND WHEN HE DIED AN' YOU CAME HERE... YOU WERE A REMINDER OF TH' FAILURE I AM.
SO I WHIPPED YOU AN' SNEERED AT YOU...BUT I JUST HATED MYSELF MORE... AND HATED YOU MORE.

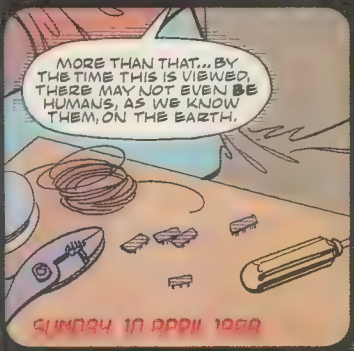
I WON'T SAY I'M SORRY, 'CAUSE THAT DON'T MEAN ANYTHING... BUT... YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS... I'M PROUD OF YOU, BOY.
THAT PROBABLY DON'T MEAN ANYTHING EITHER... BUT IN CASE IT DOES...THEN, YOU SHOULD KNOW...


BEEN GOOD T' SEE YOU, WHITEY... IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING. IT'S BEEN GOOD.
FOR ME TOO, TIM. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THE BARN?
WE'LL JUST TELL FOLKS IT WAS TH' SEA MONSTER, BURNIN' IT WITH ITS FIERY BREATH OR SOMETHIN'...
GEE, I WAS HOPING THAT UNCLE EZ WOULD COME TO SEE US OFF.
I DON'T THINK HE'S COMING. THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY POINT TO IT.
BUT, AFTER LAST NIGHT...
YOU KIND OF HOPED THERE WOULD BE A HAPPY ENDING, DIDN'T YOU, PAL? THAT BECAUSE HE SAVED MY LIFE, I WOULD FORGIVE HIM AND WE COULD BE FRIENDS. HUH?
YEAH, THAT WOULD BE GREAT.
IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT OF HISTORY BETWEEN US...THINGS I DON'T THINK I CAN FORGIVE...MAYBE THINGS I SHOULDN'T FORGIVE...
27

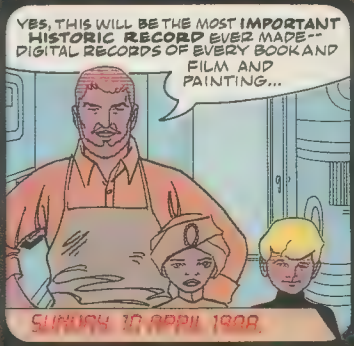
WHAT LAST NIGHT DID...IT EVENED THINGS UP A LITTLE. IT MADE ME SEE THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY.
THE LAST TIME I LEFT, I TOOK A LOT OF ANGER AND BITTERNESS WITH ME. I HAD TO LOCK AWAY A PART OF MYSELF AND NEVER LOOK AT IT.
DRAGONVILLE
FOLLOW ME TO DRALON
"BUT THIS TIME I THINK I'M WALKING AWAY CLEAN. FOR ME, THE DRAGON IS DEAD..."
"...I GUESS THAT'S ENOUGH HAPPY ENDING FOR ANY MAN."
DRAGONVILLE
FOLLOW ME TO DRALON COVE
The End

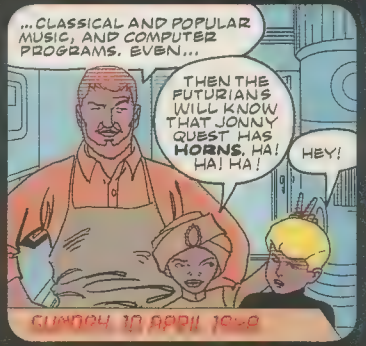

THERE. I THINK THAT'S GOT THE MICROPHONE WORKING. HAND ME THAT SCREW-DRIVER, WILL YOU, SON?
HERE, DAD. DO YOU THINK IT WILL WORK?
I DON'T KNOW WHY NOT... THE TECHNOLOGY IS VERY SIMPLE. DESIGNING A CASE TO HOLD IT IS THE TRICKY PART! AFTER ALL, IT HAS TO LAST FOREVER!
THIS IS WHAT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR QUEST. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY TIME CAPSULES. WHY MUST THIS ONE BE SO STURDY?
THAT'S RIGHT, DAD. I SAW ONE ON TV THAT THEY DUG UP FROM 1896. IT HAD SOME NEAT OLD EYE-GLASSES AND A BUTTER CHURN AND...
BUT THOSE WERE MEANT TO BE OPENED AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS OR SO. THIS ONE SHOULD NOT BE OPENED FOR SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS! IT WILL BE SHOT INTO AN ELLIPTICAL ORBIT AROUND THE SUN, AND THEN RETURN TO EARTH, CARRYING A RECORD OF OUR CULTURE WITH IT.
WILL THEY BE ABLE TO READ IT?
THAT'S WHY THE VIEWER PORT IS BUILT IN. AND THE "TAPE" IS ACTUALLY A DISC OF HIGH-IMPACT PLASTIC, ENGRAVED WITH A BINARY CODE BY LASER. IT WILL BE SOLAR-POWERED AND NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE!
LIKE A SUPER-CD, HUH, DAD?
THAT'S RIGHT, JONNY. AND IT'S A GREAT HONOR... AH, I THINK THAT'S GOT IT!

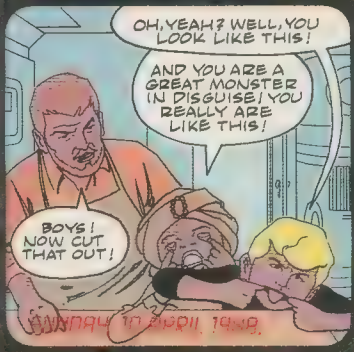
VANTAGE POINT

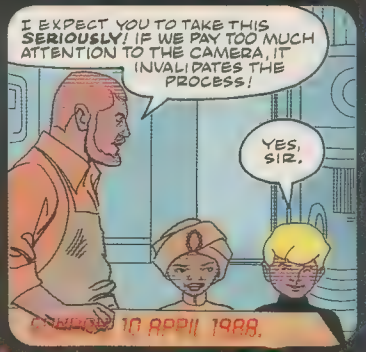

MORE THAN THAT... BY THE TIME THIS IS VIEWED, THERE MAY NOT EVEN BE HUMANS, AS WE KNOW THEM, ON THE EARTH.

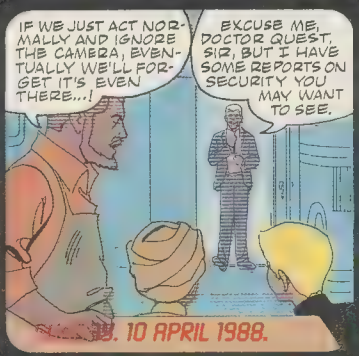
ANOTHER LIFE FORM COULD BE DOMINANT!
GOSH!
WOW!

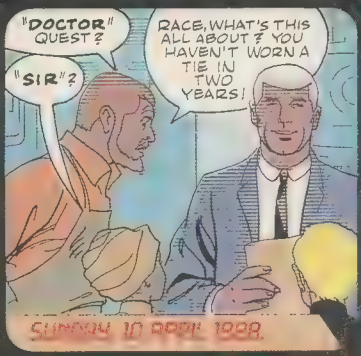

YES, THIS WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT HISTORIC RECORD EVER MADE-- DIGITAL RECORDS OF EVERY BOOK AND FILM AND PAINTING...

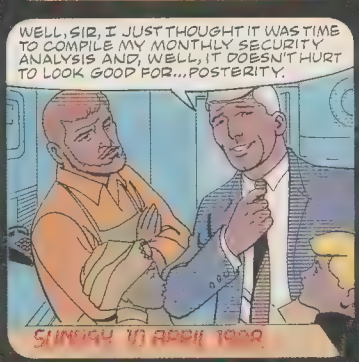

...CLASSICAL AND POPULAR MUSIC, AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS. EVEN...
THEN THE FUTURIANS WILL KNOW THAT JONNY QUEST HAS HORNS. HA! HA! HA!
HEY!


OH, YEAH? WELL, YOU LOOK LIKE THIS!
AND YOU ARE A GREAT MONSTER IN DISGUISE! YOU REALLY ARE LIKE THIS!
BOYS! NOW CUT THAT OUT!

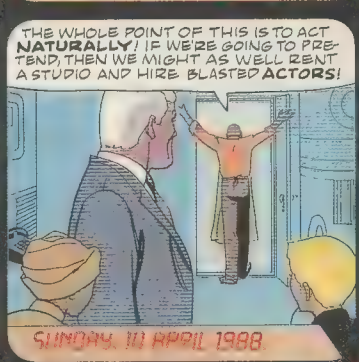

I EXPECT YOU TO TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY! IF WE PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO THE CAMERA, IT INVALIDATES THE PROCESS!
YES, SIR.

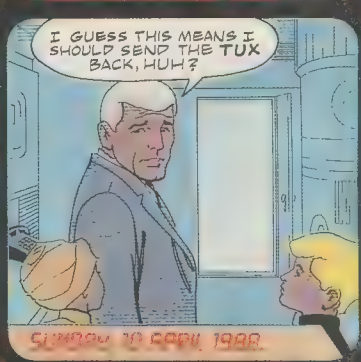

IF WE JUST ACT NORMALLY AND IGNORE THE CAMERA, EVENTUALLY WE'LL FORGET IT'S EVEN THERE...!
EXCUSE ME, DOCTOR QUEST, SIR, BUT I HAVE SOME REPORTS ON SECURITY YOU MAY WANT TO SEE.
SUNDAY, 10 APRIL 1988.


"DOCTOR" QUEST?
"SIR"?
RACE, WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT? YOU HAVEN'T WORN A TIE IN TWO YEARS!
SUNDAY, 10 APRIL 1988.

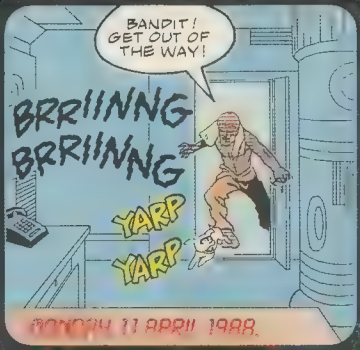

WELL, SIR, I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS TIME TO COMPILE MY MONTHLY SECURITY ANALYSIS AND, WELL, IT DOESN'T HURT TO LOOK GOOD FOR... POSTERITY.
SUNDAY, 10 APRIL 1988

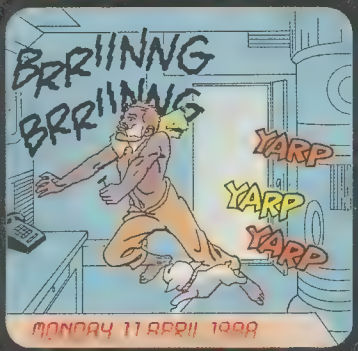
OH, I SEE...

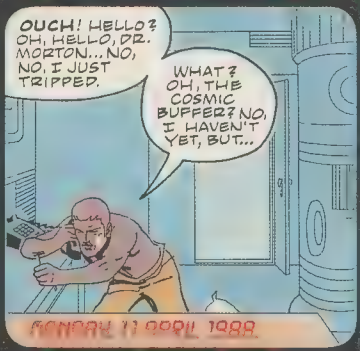

THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS IS TO ACT NATURALLY! IF WE'RE GOING TO PRETEND, THEN WE MIGHT AS WELL RENT A STUDIO AND HIRE BLASTED ACTORS!
SUNDAY, 10 APRIL 1988

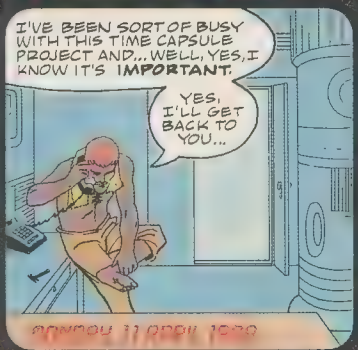

I GUESS THIS MEANS I SHOULD SEND THE TUX BACK, HUH?

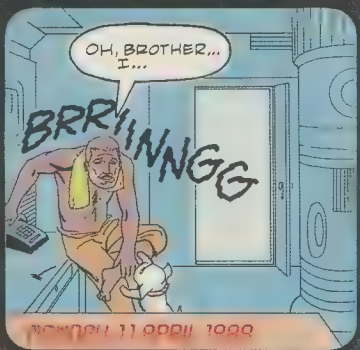
BRRIINNGG
BRRIINNGG
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988

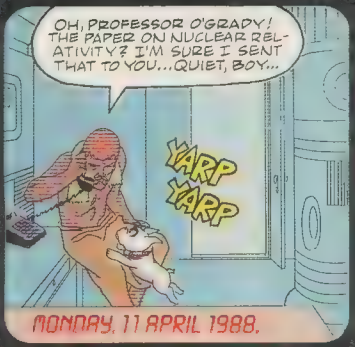

BANDIT! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
BRRIINNG
BRRIINNG
YARP
YARP
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988

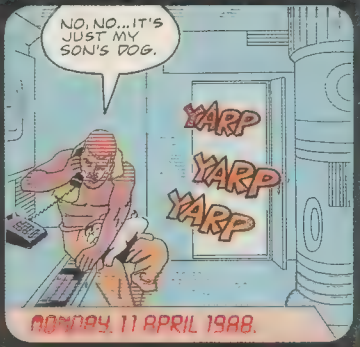

BRRIINNG
BRRIINNG
YARP
YARP
YARP
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988

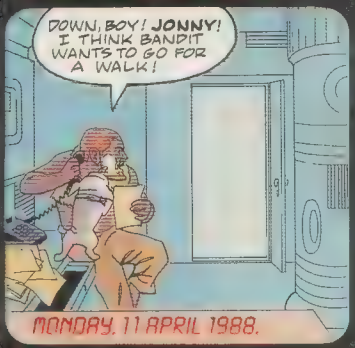

OUCH! HELLO? OH, HELLO, DR. MORTON... NO, NO, I JUST TRIPPED.
WHAT? OH, THE COSMIC BUFFER? NO, I HAVEN'T YET, BUT..
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988

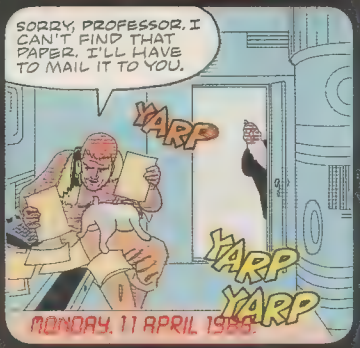

I'VE BEEN SORT OF BUSY WITH THIS TIME CAPSULE PROJECT AND... WELL, YES, I KNOW IT'S IMPORTANT.
YES, I'LL GET BACK TO YOU...
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988

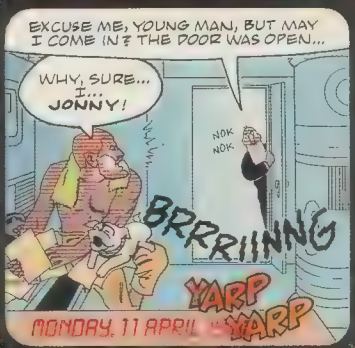

OH, BROTHER... I...
BRRIINNGG
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988

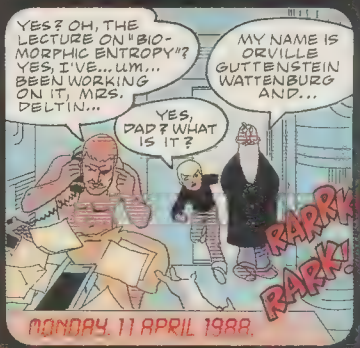

OH, PROFESSOR O'GRADY! THE PAPER ON NUCLEAR RELATIVITY? I'M SURE I SENT THAT TO YOU... QUIET, BOY...
YARP YARP
MONDAY, 11 APRIL 1988.


NO, NO... IT'S JUST MY SON'S DOG.
YARP YARP YARP
MONDAY, 11 APRIL 1988.

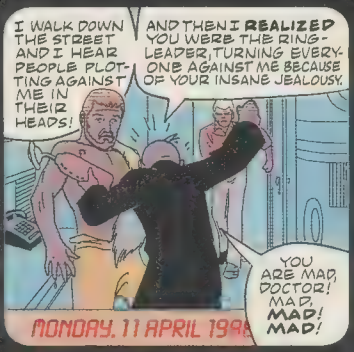

DOWN, BOY! JONNY! I THINK BANDIT WANTS TO GO FOR A WALK!
MONDAY, 11 APRIL 1988.

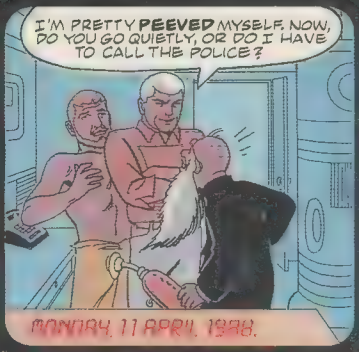

SORRY, PROFESSOR, I CAN'T FIND THAT PAPER. I'LL HAVE TO MAIL IT TO YOU.
YARP
YARP YARP
MONDAY, 11 APRIL 1988.

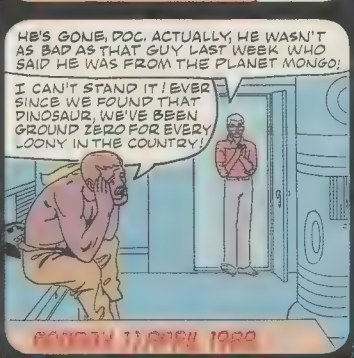

EXCUSE ME, YOUNG MAN, BUT MAY I COME IN? THE DOOR WAS OPEN...
WHY, SURE... I... JONNY!
NOK NOK
BRRRIINNG
YARP YARP
MONDAY, 11 APRIL

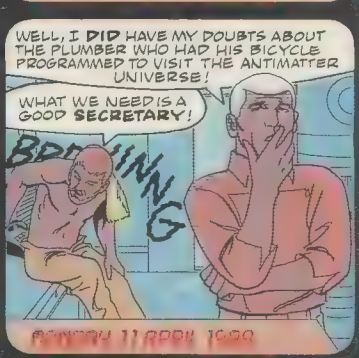

YES? OH, THE LECTURE ON "BIOMORPHIC ENTROPY"? YES, I'VE... UM... BEEN WORKING ON IT, MRS. DELTIN...
YES, DAD? WHAT IS IT?
MY NAME IS ORVILLE GUTTENSTEIN WATTENBURG AND...
RAPRK RARK!
MONDAY, 11 APRIL 1988.

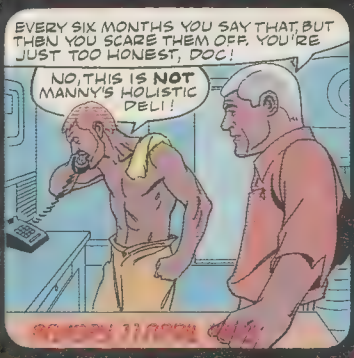
DON'T WORRY, MRS. DELTIN. I'LL BE THERE...
...JONNY, GET BANDIT OUT OF HERE.
MY NAME IS ORVILLE GUTTENSTEIN...
MONDAY 11 APRIL
SORRY ABOUT THE CHAOS. I'M BENTON QUEST.
I'M ORVILLE GUTTENSTEIN WATTENBURG AND YOU'RE VERY GLAD TO MEET ME!
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988.
I AM? WELL, OF COURSE I AM, BUT...
SURPRISED, EH? DIDN'T KNOW I COULD READ YOUR MIND, EH?
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988.
A LITTLE THREATENED, BECAUSE I, AND NOT YOU, AM THE WORLD'S GREATEST SCIENTIST, EH?
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988.
THIS IS THE O.G. WATTENBURG BRAIN ELECTRIFIER. IT ALLOWS THE BRAIN TO BECOME SO POWERFUL THAT OTHERS' THOUGHTS CAN BE READ LIKE A CHEAP NOVEL.
YOU, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE EXTREMELY JEALOUS OF ME!
BRAIN
BUT... BUT...
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988.
YOU ARE PLOTTING AGAINST ME! IN FACT, EVERYONE IS PLOTTING AGAINST ME!
HELLO? MR. LASKY? I CAN'T GIVE AN INTERVIEW RIGHT NOW. THERE'S KIND OF A PROBLEM...
RACE! RACE, PLEASE GET IN HERE!
MONDAY 11 APRIL 1988.

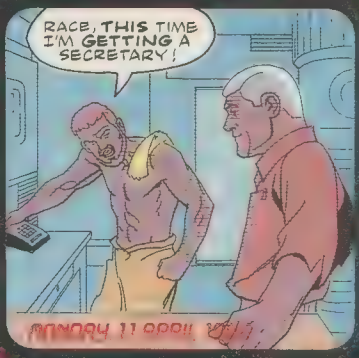

I WALK DOWN THE STREET AND I HEAR PEOPLE PLOTTING AGAINST ME IN THEIR HEADS!
AND THEN I REALIZED YOU WERE THE RINGLEADER, TURNING EVERYONE AGAINST ME BECAUSE OF YOUR INSANE JEALOUSY.
YOU ARE MAD, DOCTOR! MAD, MAD! MAD!
MONDAY, 11 APRIL 1998

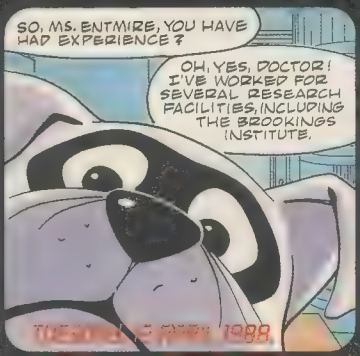

I'M PRETTY PEEVED MYSELF. NOW, DO YOU GO QUIETLY, OR DO I HAVE TO CALL THE POLICE?
MONDAY, 11 APRIL 1998.


HE'S GONE, DOC. ACTUALLY, HE WASN'T AS BAD AS THAT GUY LAST WEEK WHO SAID HE WAS FROM THE PLANET MONGO!
I CAN'T STAND IT! EVER SINCE WE FOUND THAT DINOSAUR, WE'VE BEEN GROUND ZERO FOR EVERY LOONY IN THE COUNTRY!

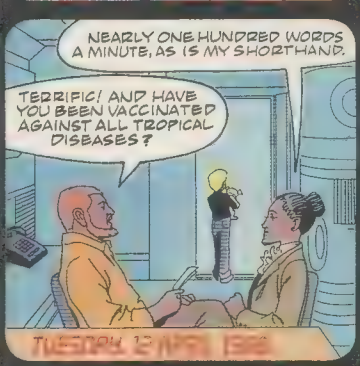

WELL, I DID HAVE MY DOUBTS ABOUT THE PLUMBER WHO HAD HIS BICYCLE PROGRAMMED TO VISIT THE ANTIMATTER UNIVERSE!
WHAT WE NEED IS A GOOD SECRETARY!


EVERY SIX MONTHS YOU SAY THAT, BUT THEN YOU SCARE THEM OFF. YOU'RE JUST TOO HONEST, DOC!
NO, THIS IS NOT MANNY'S HOLISTIC DELI!

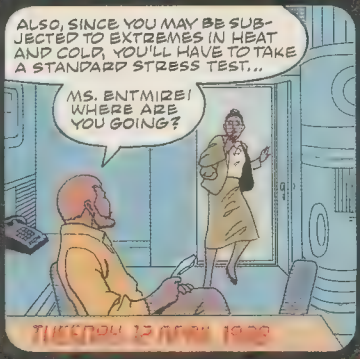

RACE, THIS TIME I'M GETTING A SECRETARY!

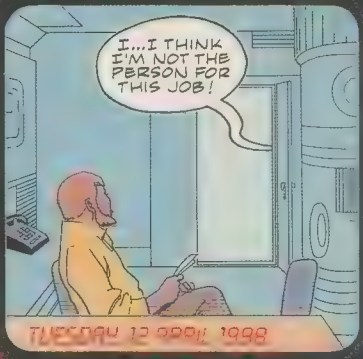

SO, MS. ENTMIRE, YOU HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE?
OH, YES, DOCTOR! I'VE WORKED FOR SEVERAL RESEARCH FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE.

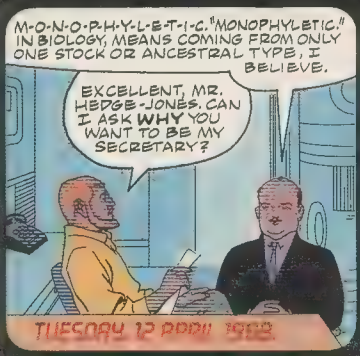
BANDIT! BAD DOG! STAY AWAY FROM THERE!
YOUR REFERENCES ARE EXCELLENT. WHAT IS YOUR TYPING SPEED?

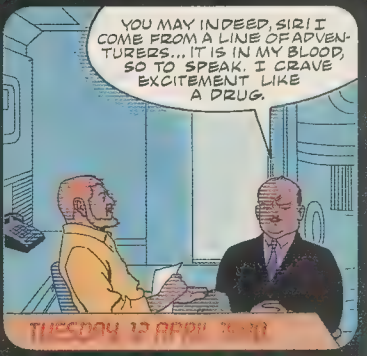

NEARLY ONE HUNDRED WORDS A MINUTE, AS IS MY SHORTHAND.
TERRIFIC! AND HAVE YOU BEEN VACCINATED AGAINST ALL TROPICAL DISEASES?

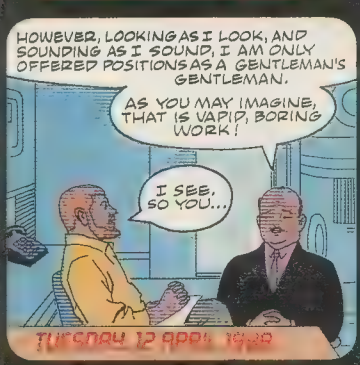
WELL, I... NO, NOT REALLY...
AND HAVE YOU ANY EXPERIENCE WITH FIRST AID, FLYING A HOVERCRAFT, OR FIRING SMALL ARMS?

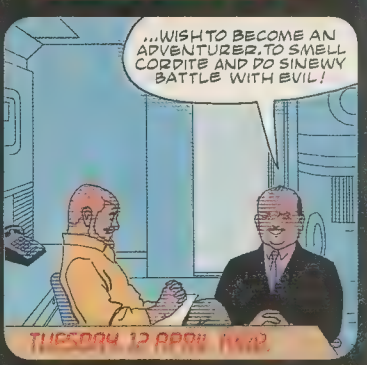

ALSO, SINCE YOU MAY BE SUBJECTED TO EXTREMES IN HEAT AND COLD, YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE A STANDARD STRESS TEST...
MS. ENTMIRE! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

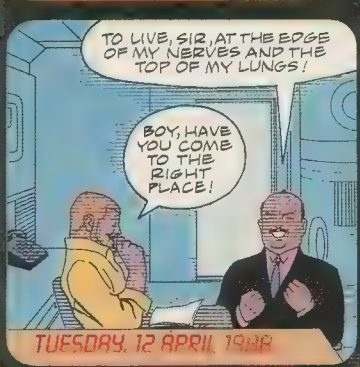

I... I THINK I'M NOT THE PERSON FOR THIS JOB!

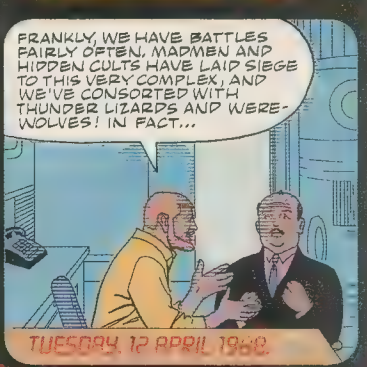

M-O-N-O-P-H-Y-L-E-T-I-C. "MONOPHYLETIC." IN BIOLOGY, MEANS COMING FROM ONLY ONE STOCK OR ANCESTRAL TYPE, I BELIEVE.
EXCELLENT, MR. HEDGE-JONES. CAN I ASK **WHY** YOU WANT TO BE MY SECRETARY?
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1960


YOU MAY INDEED, SIR! I COME FROM A LINE OF ADVENTURERS... IT IS IN MY BLOOD, SO TO SPEAK. I CRAVE EXCITEMENT LIKE A DRUG.
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1960

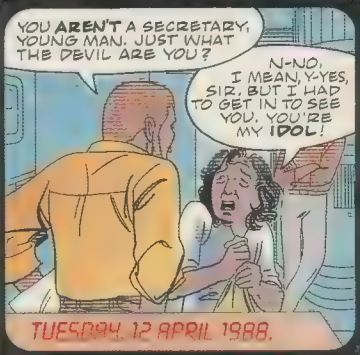

HOWEVER, LOOKING AS I LOOK, AND SOUNDING AS I SOUND, I AM ONLY OFFERED POSITIONS AS A GENTLEMAN'S GENTLEMAN.
AS YOU MAY IMAGINE, THAT IS VAPID, BORING WORK!
I SEE. SO YOU...
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1960

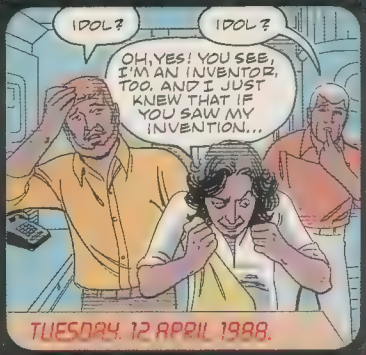

...WISH TO BECOME AN ADVENTURER. TO SMELL CORDITE AND DO SINEWY BATTLE WITH EVIL!
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1960

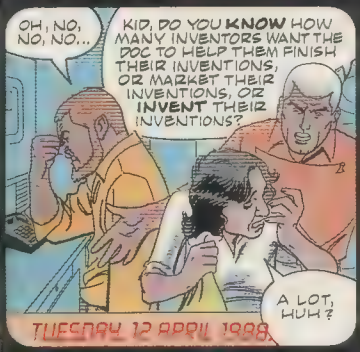

TO LIVE, SIR, AT THE EDGE OF MY NERVES AND THE TOP OF MY LUNGS!
BOY, HAVE YOU COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE!
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1960

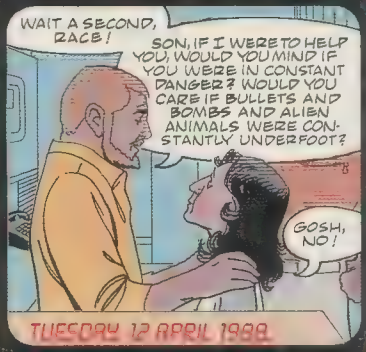

FRANKLY, WE HAVE BATTLES FAIRLY OFTEN, MADMEN AND HIDDEN CULTS HAVE LAID SIEGE TO THIS VERY COMPLEX, AND WE'VE CONSORTED WITH THUNDER LIZARDS AND WERE-WOLVES! IN FACT...
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1960

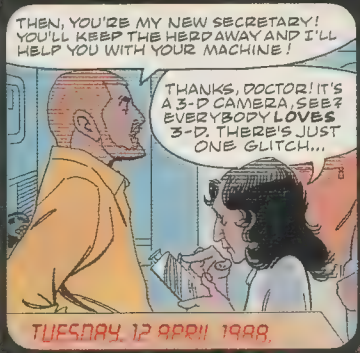
...I'M VERY GLAD TO MEET--
SLAM!
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.
THAT WAS THE LAST OF 'EM, DOC. IF YOU WANTED TO SCARE 'EM OFF, YOU SURE DID A GOOD JOB!
OH, BE QUIET, ZACE.
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.
EXCUSE ME, DOCTOR, BUT I HAVE TO SEE YOU!
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.
MY NAME IS MILLER FRANKLIN AND I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A LONG TIME.
YOU'D LIKE TO BE MY SECRETARY? VERY WELL. SPELL "IN-QUIRING."
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.
UM...E-N-C-H-O-I-R-I-N-G.
JH-HUH...AND "SUSPICIOUS"?
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.
S-E-S-S-P-I-S-H-U-S-H, I THINK...
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.

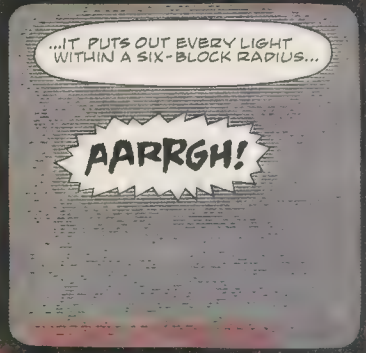

YOU AREN'T A SECRETARY, YOUNG MAN. JUST WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU?
N-NO, I MEAN, Y-YES, SIR. BUT I HAD TO GET IN TO SEE YOU. YOU'RE MY IDOL!
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.

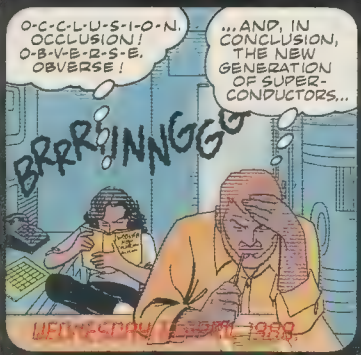

IDOL?
IDOL?
OH, YES! YOU SEE, I'M AN INVENTOR, TOO. AND I JUST KNEW THAT IF YOU SAW MY INVENTION...
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.

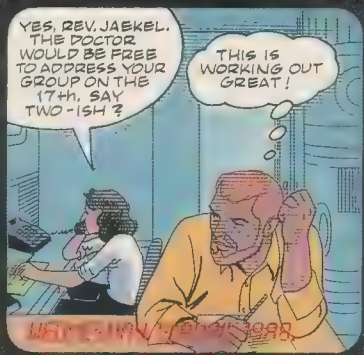

OH, NO, NO, NO...
KID, DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY INVENTORS WANT THE DOC TO HELP THEM FINISH THEIR INVENTIONS, OR MARKET THEIR INVENTIONS, OR INVENT THEIR INVENTIONS?
A LOT, HUH?
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.


WAIT A SECOND, RACE!
SON, IF I WERE TO HELP YOU, WOULD YOU MIND IF YOU WERE IN CONSTANT DANGER? WOULD YOU CARE IF BULLETS AND BOMBS AND ALIEN ANIMALS WERE CONSTANTLY UNDERFOOT?
GOSH, NO!
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.


THEN, YOU'RE MY NEW SECRETARY! YOU'LL KEEP THE HERD AWAY AND I'LL HELP YOU WITH YOUR MACHINE!
THANKS, DOCTOR! IT'S A 3-D CAMERA, SEE? EVERYBODY LOVES 3-D. THERE'S JUST ONE GLITCH...
TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988.

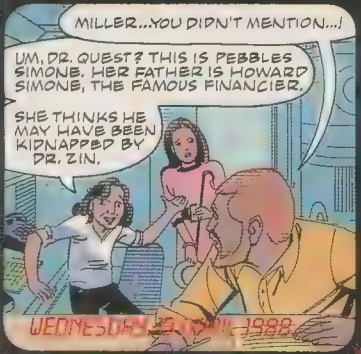

...IT PUTS OUT EVERY LIGHT WITHIN A SIX-BLOCK RADIUS...
AARRGH!

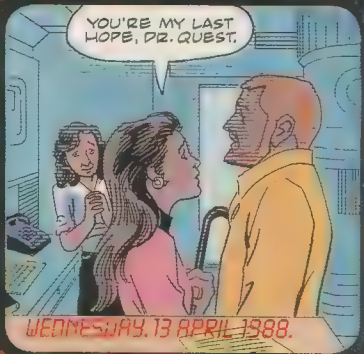

O-C-C-L-U-S-I-O-N. OCCLUSION! O-B-V-E-R-S-E. OBVERSE!
...AND, IN CONCLUSION, THE NEW GENERATION OF SUPER-CONDUCTORS...
BRRRRINNGGG
WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 1988.


YES, REV. JAEKEL. THE DOCTOR WOULD BE FREE TO ADDRESS YOUR GROUP ON THE 17th, SAY TWO-ISH?
THIS IS WORKING OUT GREAT!
WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 1988.

UM, EXCUSE ME, MR. FRANKLIN. AM I EARLY?
WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 1988.

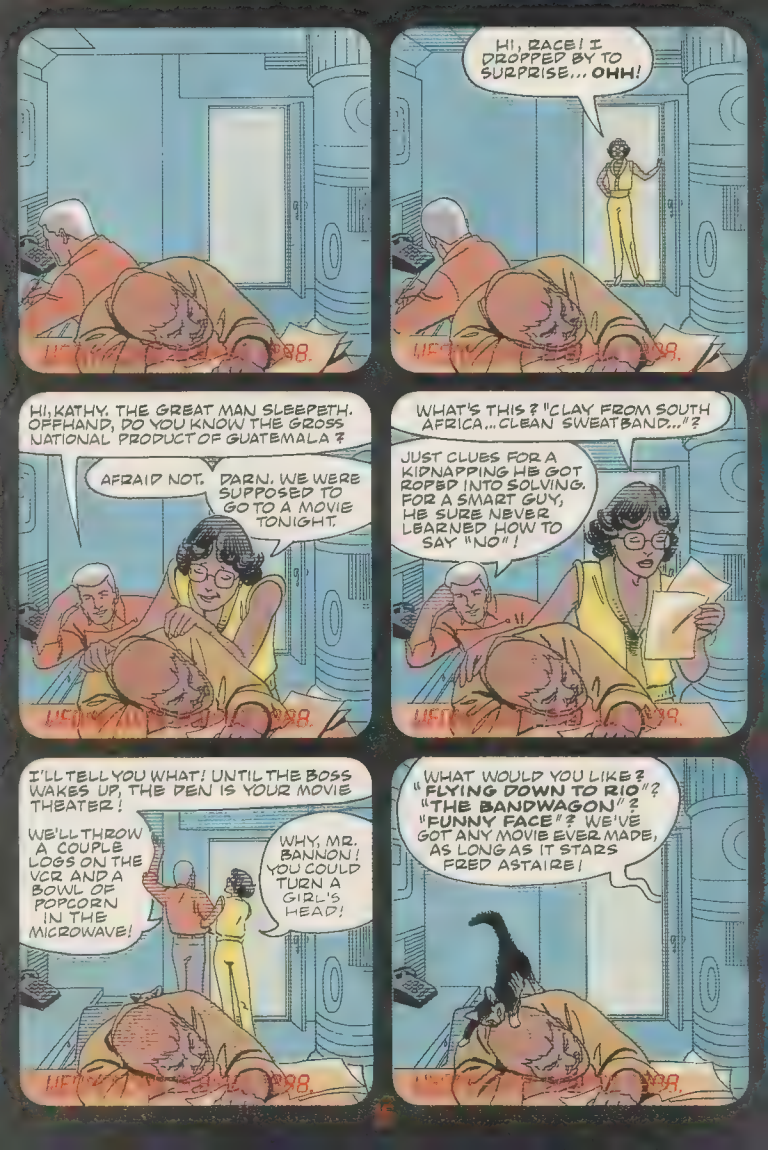
NO, NO, MISS SIMONE. PLEASE COME IN. I HAVE YOU DOWN FOR A 10:30 APPOINTMENT.
APPOINTMENT?
WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 1988.

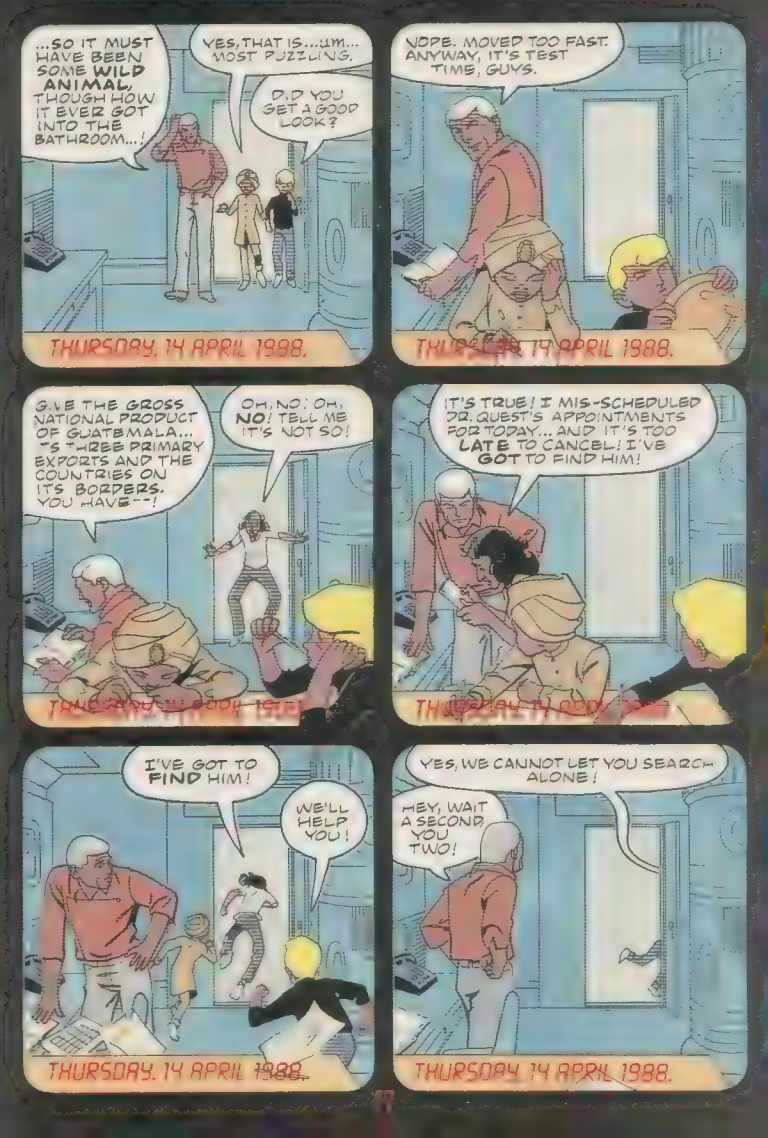

MILLER...YOU DIDN'T MENTION...!
UM, DR. QUEST? THIS IS PEBBLES SIMONE. HER FATHER IS HOWARD SIMONE, THE FAMOUS FINANCIER.
SHE THINKS HE MAY HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY DR. ZIN.
WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 1988.

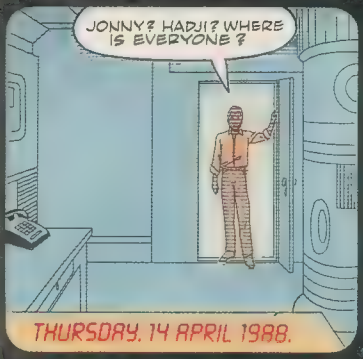

YOU'RE MY LAST HOPE, DR. QUEST.
WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 1988.

MY DAD IS ECCENTRIC, BUT NOT **THIS** ECCENTRIC. THIS IS HIS FAVORITE HAT. HE WOULDN'T GO OUT WITHOUT IT! YET I FOUND IT IN THE CENTER OF AN EMPTY ROOM.
I KNOW THAT DR. ZIN HAS BEEN TRYING TO TAKE OVER HIS BUSINESS. IF HE'S BEEN HURT...
THERE, THERE... DR. QUEST WILL FIND YOUR FATHER.
WELL, IF DR. ZIN'S INVOLVED, PERHAPS **I SHOULD** TAKE A LOOK...
THANK YOU, DOCTOR. I'M SURE YOU'LL DO YOUR BEST.
WE'LL FIND HIM, MISS SIMONE!
WHILE **WE'RE** SOLVING THE CASE, **WE** SHOULD REMEMBER THAT **WE** ARE A SCIENTIST, NOT A **DETECTIVE**. AND THAT **WE** LIKE TO BE **TOLD** WHEN **WE** HAVE APPOINTMENTS!
YES, SIR. ISN'T SHE **WONDERFUL**?

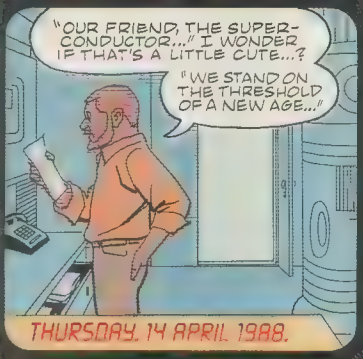
A-D-O-R-A-T-I-O-N. ADORATION!
WONDER WHAT ZIN IS UP TO NOW...? THIS DRIED MUD ON THE CANE COULD MEAN SOMETHING...
I'M GOING TO SEE WHAT RACE IS FIXING FOR LUNCH.
AND THIS HAT... HMMM. MAYBE I AM A DETECTIVE...!
THERE HE IS, JONNY... NOW, YOU MUST ASK HIM.
GOSH, HAJ, I DON'T KNOW WHY I GOTTA DO IT...
UM, DAD...? HADJI AND BANDIT AND I FOUND THIS LITTLE KITTEN OUT BY THE BEACH AND IT'S HALF-STARVED AND WE THOUGHT WE COULD MAKE A BED FOR IT IN THE LAB, JUST TILL SOMEBODY CLAIMS IT. OKAY?
SURE, SON. JUST DON'T STAY OUT TOO LATE.
UM... I AM NOT SURE HE HEARD YOU.
WELL, AT LEAST HE DIDN'T SAY NO!

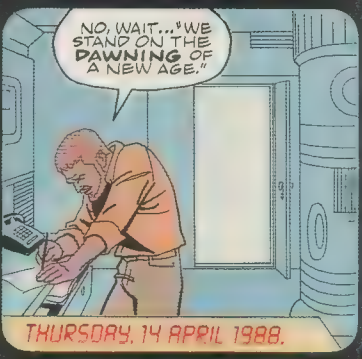

HI, RACE! I DROPPED BY TO SURPRISE... OHH!
HI, KATHY. THE GREAT MAN SLEEPETH. OFFHAND, DO YOU KNOW THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT OF GUATEMALA?
AFRAID NOT. DARN. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GO TO A MOVIE TONIGHT.
WHAT'S THIS? "CLAY FROM SOUTH AFRICA... CLEAN SWEATBAND..."?
JUST CLUES FOR A KIDNAPPING HE GOT ROPED INTO SOLVING. FOR A SMART GUY, HE SURE NEVER LEARNED HOW TO SAY "NO"!
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT! UNTIL THE BOSS WAKES UP, THE DEN IS YOUR MOVIE THEATER!
WE'LL THROW A COUPLE LOGS ON THE VCR AND A BOWL OF POPCORN IN THE MICROWAVE!
WHY, MR. BANNON! YOU COULD TURN A GIRL'S HEAD!
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE? "FLYING DOWN TO RIO"? "THE BANDWAGON"? "FUNNY FACE"? WE'VE GOT ANY MOVIE EVER MADE, AS LONG AS IT STARS FRED ASTAIRE!

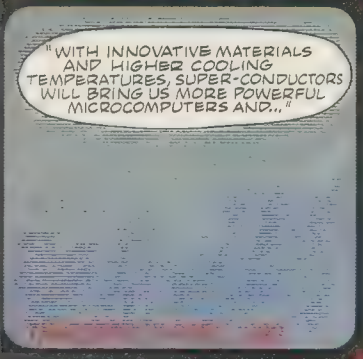

...SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME WILD ANIMAL, THOUGH HOW IT EVER GOT INTO THE BATHROOM...!
YES, THAT IS...UM... MOST PUZZLING.
DID YOU GET A GOOD LOOK?
THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 1988.
NOPE. MOVED TOO FAST. ANYWAY, IT'S TEST TIME, GUYS.
THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 1988.
GIVE THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT OF GUATEMALA... *5 THREE PRIMARY EXPORTS AND THE COUNTRIES ON ITS BORDERS. YOU HAVE--!
OH, NO! OH, NO! TELL ME IT'S NOT SO!
IT'S TRUE! I MIS-SCHEDULED DR. QUEST'S APPOINTMENTS FOR TODAY... AND IT'S TOO LATE TO CANCEL! I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!
I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!
WE'LL HELP YOU!
THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 1988.
YES, WE CANNOT LET YOU SEARCH ALONE!
HEY, WAIT A SECOND YOU TWO!
THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 1988.

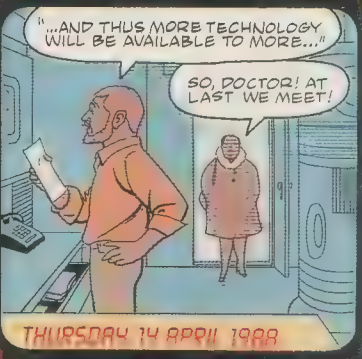

JONNY? HADJI? WHERE IS EVERYONE?
THURSDAY. 14 APRIL 1988.

NO ONE IN HERE. WELL, THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO FINISH MY SPEECH.


"OUR FRIEND, THE SUPER-CONDUCTOR..." I WONDER IF THAT'S A LITTLE CUTE...?
"WE STAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW AGE..."
THURSDAY. 14 APRIL 1988.

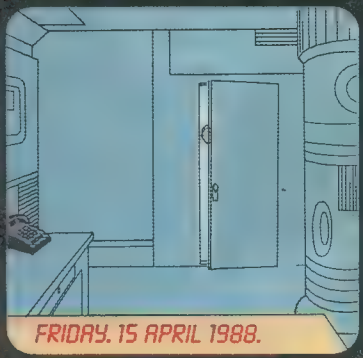

NO, WAIT..."WE STAND ON THE DAWNING OF A NEW AGE."
THURSDAY. 14 APRIL 1988.

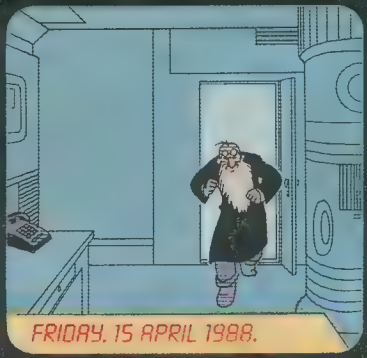

"WITH INNOVATIVE MATERIALS AND HIGHER COOLING TEMPERATURES, SUPER-CONDUCTORS WILL BRING US MORE POWERFUL MICROCOMPUTERS AND..."

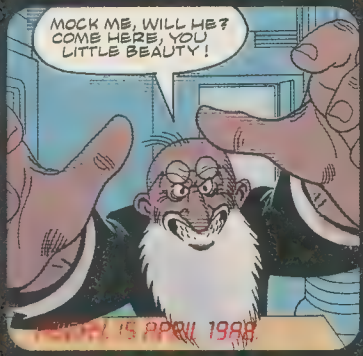

"...AND THUS MORE TECHNOLOGY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MORE..."
SO, DOCTOR! AT LAST WE MEET!
THURSDAY. 14 APRIL 1988

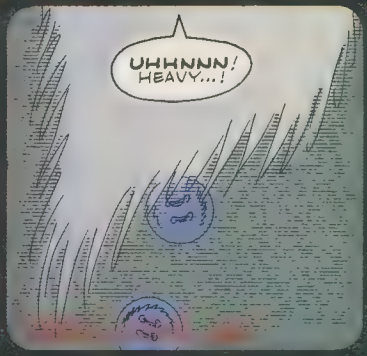
EXCUSE ME...?
I'M HAZEL BROWN, OF BROWN'S ELECTRONICS. HAVE I KEPT YOU WAITING?
NO, BUT...
GOOD, BECAUSE I'VE GOT A LOT OF NEW SUPPLIES TO SHOW YOU! WHERE SHOULD I...?
THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 1988.
AH-HAH! THERE YOU ARE, BROWN!
THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 1988.
TRYING TO STEAL MY CUSTOMERS AGAIN, EH, BROWN?
THIS IS MY APPOINTMENT, GREEN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THURSDAY, 14 APRIL
LIAR! THIS IS MY APPOINTMENT! I'LL CLAW YOUR EYES OUT!
YOU AND WHAT ARMY? YOUR MICROCHIPS ARE AN INDUSTRY JOKE!
YOUR DIODES ARE GARBAGE, YOU ELECTRONIC SNEAK!
NOW, HOLD ON A SECOND!
1988.

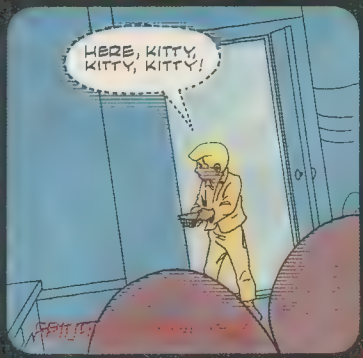
DON'T YOU TALK TO US! INVITING US HERE AT THE SAME TIME TO TRY AND GET A CHEAPER PRICE! YOU...!
UH, EXCUSE ME... I'M LOOKING FOR BENTON QUEST...?
.WHITE!
THURSDAY 14 APRIL 1988
GREEN! WHAT ARE YOU...?
HE INVITED US ALL HERE...
IF YOU TWO THINK...
UH, EXCUSE ME...? DR. QUEST? HAVE YOU FOUND MY FATHER YET?
THURSDAY 14 APR
WELL, NOT EXACTLY, MS. SIMONE...
THIS IS IMPORTANT! DR. ZIN COULD BE DOING SOOS ANYTHING TO HIM! WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?
SIR? I'M GENERAL POTTER'S AIDE, AND I WAS TOLD YOU HAD A PROTOTYPE FOR HIM...?
NOT EXACTLY. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO WRITE THIS SPEECH...
AND THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY FATHER?
THAN KEEPING MY APPOINT-MENT?
YOUR APPOINT-MENT? WHY, YOU...
WHAT ABOUT NATIONAL SECURITY?
OH, THERE YOU ARE! I SEE YOU HAVE EVERYTHING STRAIGHTENED OUT! AND I WAS WORRIED YOU MIGHT HAVE PROBLEMS!

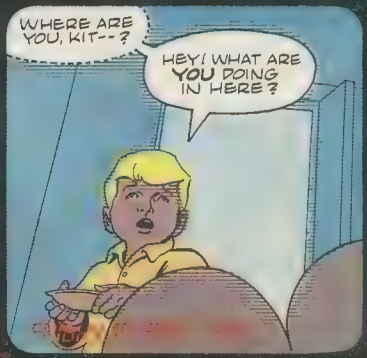

FRIDAY. 15 APRIL 1988.


FRIDAY. 15 APRIL 1988.


MOCK ME, WILL HE? COME HERE, YOU LITTLE BEAUTY!


UHHNNN! HEAVY...!

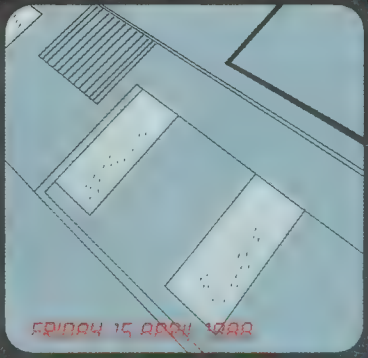

HERE, KITTY, KITTY, KITTY!

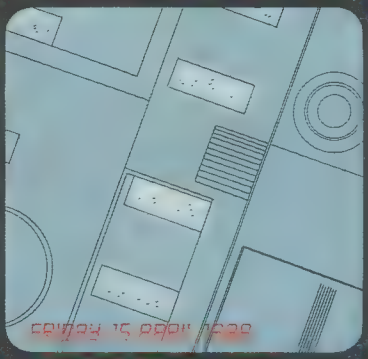

WHERE ARE YOU, KIT--?
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?

YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT!
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 1988
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 1988
EXIT
HE'S GETTING AWAY! HADJI! DAD! HELP!
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 1988
I'VE GOT HIM, JONNY!
FRIDAY 15 APRIL
HE'S HEADING TOWARDS YOU, JONNY!
HUF HUF HUF
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 1988
NOW STAND BACK! NOTHING CAN KEEP ME FROM THIS MACHINE!
OH-OH.
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 1988

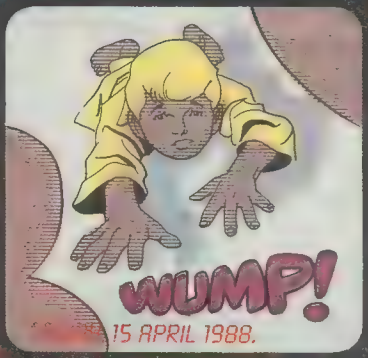
NOW, OPEN THAT DOOR!
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL
JONNY, ARE YOU IN THERE? I JUST FOUND THIS KITTEN IN MY ROOM AND...
...OOPS!
HIISSST!
SPPRASSST!
YAAAA!
HELLLP!
JONNY! HE SLIPPED!
FRIDAY, 15

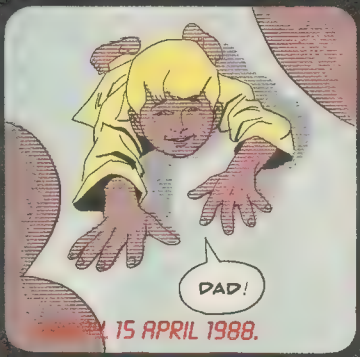
CATCH IT!
I'M TRYING!
FRIDAY. 15 APRIL 1988.



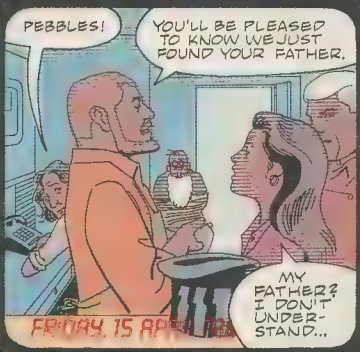


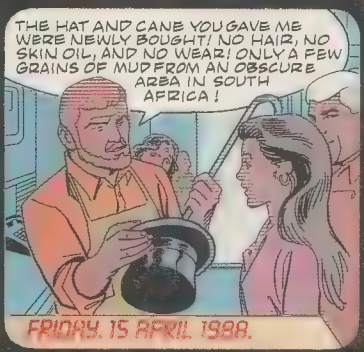
OH, NO!
FRIDAY. 15 APRIL 1988.

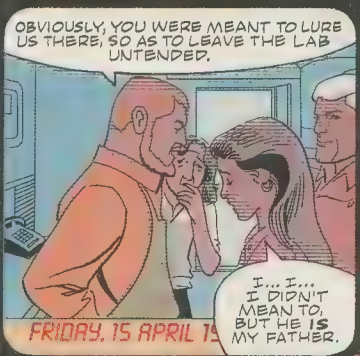

WUMP!

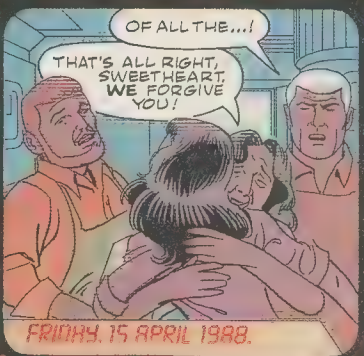

DAD!
15 APRIL 1988.

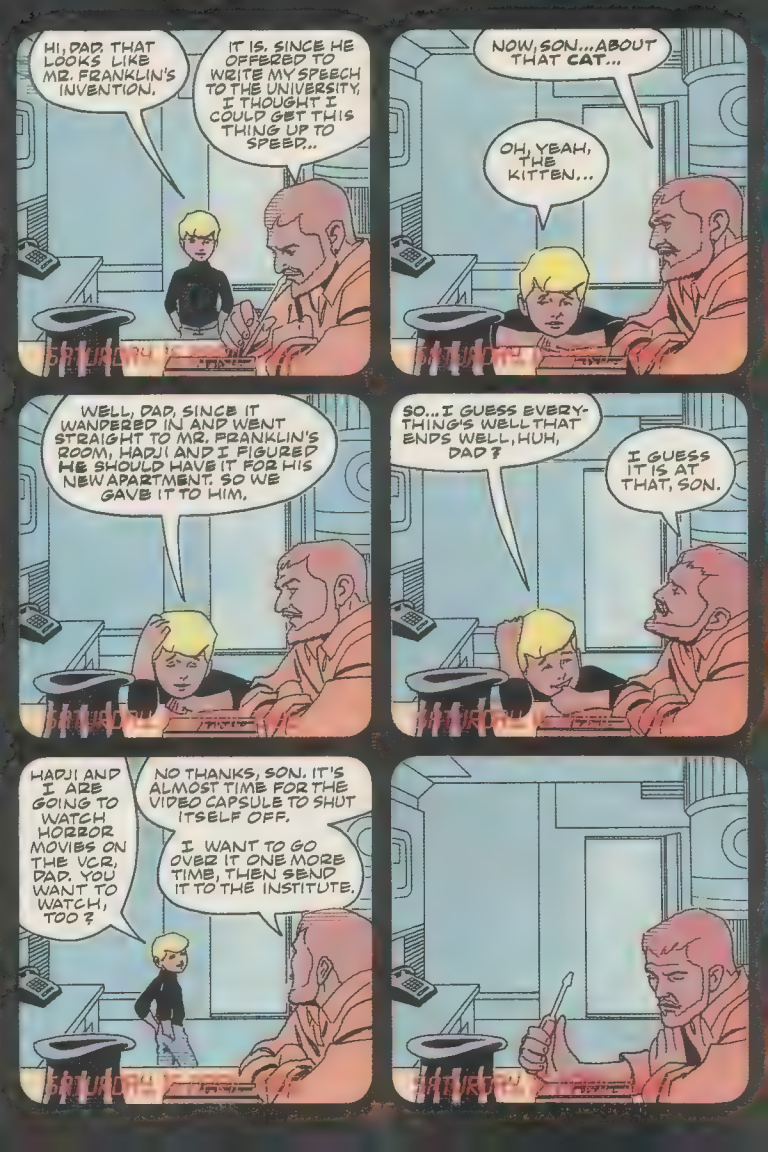
IT LOOKS ALL RIGHT, DAD.
IT'S MS. SIMONE!
LOOK WHO WAS HIDING IN THE FRONT CLOSET.
THANKS TO YOU TWO BOYS.
FRIDAY, 15 APR

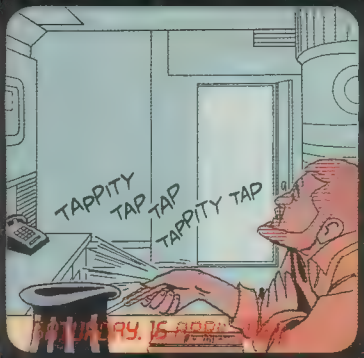

PEBBLES!
YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO KNOW WE JUST FOUND YOUR FATHER.
MY FATHER? I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
FRIDAY, 15 APR

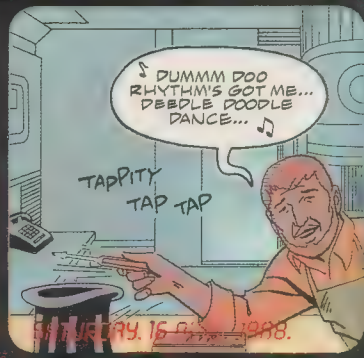

THE HAT AND CANE YOU GAVE ME WERE NEWLY BOUGHT! NO HAIR, NO SKIN OIL, AND NO WEAR! ONLY A FEW GRAINS OF MUD FROM AN OBSCURE AREA IN SOUTH AFRICA!
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 1988.

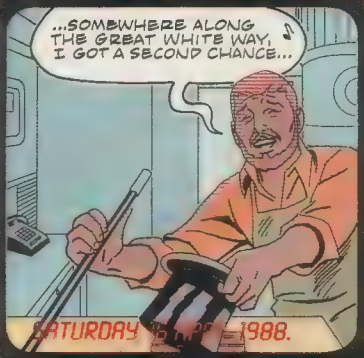

OBVIOUSLY, YOU WERE MEANT TO LURE US THERE, SO AS TO LEAVE THE LAB UNTENDED.
I... I... I DIDN'T MEAN TO, BUT HE **IS** MY FATHER.
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 19

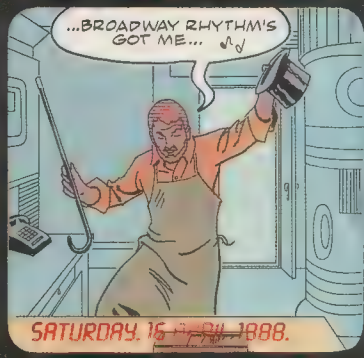

OF ALL THE...!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, SWEETHEART. **WE** FORGIVE YOU!
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 1988.


HI, DAD. THAT LOOKS LIKE MR. FRANKLIN'S INVENTION.
IT IS. SINCE HE OFFERED TO WRITE MY SPEECH TO THE UNIVERSITY, I THOUGHT I COULD GET THIS THING UP TO SPEED...
NOW, SON...ABOUT THAT CAT...
OH, YEAH, THE KITTEN...
WELL, DAD, SINCE IT WANDERED IN AND WENT STRAIGHT TO MR. FRANKLIN'S ROOM, HADJI AND I FIGURED HE SHOULD HAVE IT FOR HIS NEW APARTMENT. SO WE GAVE IT TO HIM.
SO...I GUESS EVERYTHING'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, HUH, DAD?
I GUESS IT IS AT THAT, SON.
HADJI AND I ARE GOING TO WATCH HORROR MOVIES ON THE VCR, DAD. YOU WANT TO WATCH, TOO?
NO THANKS, SON. IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE VIDEO CAPSULE TO SHUT ITSELF OFF.
I WANT TO GO OVER IT ONE MORE TIME, THEN SEND IT TO THE INSTITUTE.


TAPPITY TAP TAP TAPPITY TAP
SATURDAY. 16 APRIL 1988.


♪ DUMMM DOO RHYTHM'S GOT ME... DEEDLE DOODLE DANCE... ♫
TAPPITY TAP TAP


...SOMEWHERE ALONG THE GREAT WHITE WAY, I GOT A SECOND CHANCE... ♪
SATURDAY 16 APR 1988.


...BROADWAY RHYTHM'S GOT ME... ♪♫
SATURDAY. 16 APRIL 1888.

...EVERYBODY SING AND... ♪ ♬
SATURDAY. 16 APRIL 1988.

CLICK

JONNY QUEST #23, April 1988 Published by **COMICO The Comic Company,** 1547 DeKalb St., Norristown PA 19401
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OF COURSE, "CAUTION" IS YOUR FIRST NAME.
YOU'RE A GREAT SCIENTIST, DOC. YOU'RE JUST NOT VERY.. SPONTANEOUS.
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, DEAR: "ANYONE WHO CAN SPELL 'IMPETUOSITY' PROBABLY DOESN'T LIVE IT"!
ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY I'M BORING?
NOT BORING... NOT EXACTLY...
"CAREFUL," MAYBE... "THOUGHTFUL," "PREDICTABLE," BUT NOT BORING.
PREDICTABLE?
AFTER ALL, DOC, YOU DO EAT EXACTLY THE SAME BREAKFAST--YOGURT, BRAN MUFFINS WITH HONEY, AND ORANGE JUICE--EVERY MORNING AT EXACTLY 8:05!
BUT I LOVE YOU ANYWAY, BENTON--EVEN IF I CAN SET MY WATCH BY YOU.

WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS
STORY

MARK WHEATLEY
PENCILS
INKS
COLORS

MARC HEMPEL
PENCILS
LETTERS

KATHRYN MAYER
LETTERS
COLORS

DIANA SCHUTZ
JAILER

AND YOU ALWAYS HAVE EITHER PEANUT BUTTER AND MINT JELLY, OR TURKEY ON RYE.
YES, AND ICED SASSAFRAS TEA, WITH HALF A TEA-SPOON OF SUGAR.
I AM NOT THIS PREDICTABLE!
ICE COLD
THIS IS GOOD, EXACTLY 400 PACES FROM THE SHIP... AS USUAL.
AND UNDER A SHADE TREE... AS USUAL.
AND FACING DUE WEST... AS USUAL.
WELL, I'M NOT HUNGRY JUST NOW. I THINK I'LL TAKE A COUPLE OF SOIL SAMPLES...
..."AND BUILD UP AN APPETITE!"...
YOU ALWAYS DO THAT TOO, DAD.
WILL YOU GUYS STOP THAT? JUST BECAUSE I HAVE ONE OR TWO LITTLE HABITS BASED ON LOGIC AND...
...THAT'S ODD...
THESE TREES ARE OAKS AND ELMS-- NOT NATIVE JUNGLE FLORA AT ALL...
...I THINK WE SHOULD INVESTIGATE THIS...
I KNEW HE WAS GOING TO SAY THAT.

THESE ARE DEFINITELY TEMPERATE FOREST TREES... I WONDER WHO PLANTED THEM...
LAST ONE IN IS A...
...HERE?
...WHAT THE DEVIL?
ANOTHER ME! HOW AMAZIN'!
YOU MUST BE A VISITOR TO OUR LANDS. I'M SURE I WOULD HAVE HEARD ABOUT YOU, IF YOU WERE LOCAL.
THIS IS ASTONISHING.
I CERTAINLY HOPE THIS ISN'T ONE OF HUBERT'S PRACTICAL JOKES.
OR ARE YOU SOME HALLUCINATION, BROUGHT ON BY BAD PRUNES AT LUNCH?
I DOUBT IT. MY NAME'S BENTON QUEST, AND I'M HERE ON A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION.
I'M ANTHONY, PRINCE OF STARKGRAU.
HOPELY! FRITT! COME QUICKLY!
HEY, DAD! THAT GUY LOOKS JUST LIKE YOU!

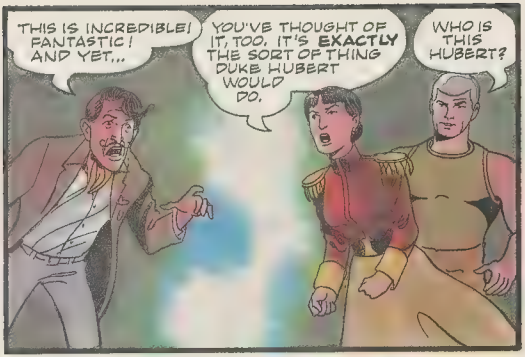
YOUR HIGHNESS! WHAT IS... OH!
STRANGERS IN STARKGRAU! AND... THE RESEMBLANCE IS AMAZING!
WHERE DID YOU FIND HIM?
HE FOUND ME, TO TELL THE TRUTH! A SPOT OF LUCK, EH?
RACE, BOYS, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET...
...ANTHONY, PRINCE OF THE BLOOD ROYAL AND MOST UNWORTHY SUCCESSOR TO THE THRONE OF STARKGRAU!
PLEASED T'MEETCHA!
YOUR HIGHNESS! YOU SHOULD NOT SPEAK SO! YOU DISHONOR YOURSELF!
WHY NOT? IT'S WHAT EVERYONE SAYS BEHIND MY BACK, ISN'T IT?
PERHAPS... BUT YOUR FATHER WOULD BE EMBARRASSED...
MY FATHER SAYS IT MOST LOUDLY OF ALL.
COME ON, BENTON... I CAN CALL YOU "BENTON," YES? I'LL SHOW YOU MY HUNTING LODGE.
I'M REALLY QUITE PROUD OF IT, AND I LOVE GUESTS!

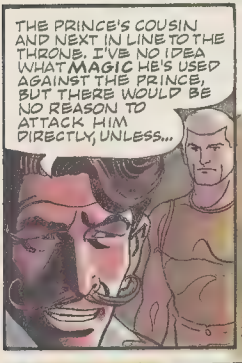
THE FIRST THING TO DO IS HAVE LUNCH, OF COURSE, AND THEN WE'LL HAVE A SPOT OF FENCING.
I LOVE FENCING!
I DON'T KNOW.. I HAVEN'T FENCED SINCE HIGH SCHOOL.
OH, BOY! BANANAS AND CAKES AND ICE CREAM!
I THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE A GREAT LUNCH!
I TRY TO KEEP MYSELF SUPPLIED WITH THE PLEASANTRIES OF LIFE.
ALAS, I MUST SOON RETURN TO THE DREARY INTRIGUES OF THE CAPITAL... TO THE ENDLESS GRIND OF STUDIES AND TRAINING.
TO YOUR DUTY, YOUR HIGHNESS.
WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING FOR?
TO BE KING, UNFORTUNATELY.
MY FATHER REFUSES TO BELIEVE I AM MASSIVELY UNSUITED TO THE UNDERTAKING, AND SO HAS BEEN TRAINING ME SINCE BOYHOOD.
VERY TRUE. HIS HIGHNESS HAS BEEN TRAINED IN SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND SOCIOLOGY. NOT TO MENTION GYMNASTICS AND MARTIAL ARTS...
...WITH MIXED RESULTS.
YES, I FAILED AT EVERYTHING, THUS SHOWING MY TRUE POTENTIAL.

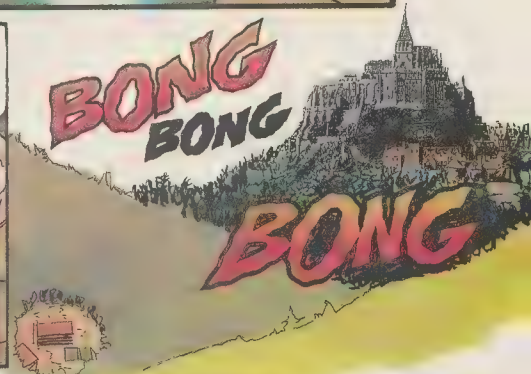
YOU SEE, OUR GOOD KING WANTS TO BE SUCCEEDED BY A RULER AS WISE AND GOOD AS HIMSELF... A PHILOSOPHER KING.
ONLY A MAN PERFECT IN EVERY WAY IS FIT TO RULE STARKGRAU.
TRUE. AFTER THE GREAT WAR, THE KING REALIZED THAT THE TIDE OF HISTORY WOULD SWEEP OVER US IF WE REMAINED IN EUROPE.
REVOLUTION WAS BREWING, SO WE MOVED AS MUCH OF STARKGRAU AS POSSIBLE TO THIS ISLAND. MOST OF US KNOW NO OTHER HOME.
AH, THAT EXPLAINS THE OAKS AND ELMS... THEY ARE TRANSPLANTS, TOO.
"HYBRIDS, ACTUALLY. BOTANY IS MY FATHER'S HOBBY. HE CREATED THEM TO MAKE THIS PLACE FEEL MORE LIKE HOME."
THE TREES HAVE TAKEN ROOT, WHILE I...
I WILL NOT HAVE YOU MOCK YOURSELF, YOUR HIGHNESS. IF YOU WOULD ONLY TRY...
I THINK YOU WOULD MAKE A GREAT KING!
ME, TOO!
NOW, IF ONLY THE REST OF MY SUBJECTS COULD BE CONVINCED WITH SWEETS AND ICE CREAM!

IF ONLY YOU WOULD APPLY YOURSELF.
I DO.
YOU APPLY YOURSELF TO HORSE-BACK RIDING, FENCING, CAROUSING, AND DISSI-PATION!
YOU TALK AS IF THAT WERE A BAD THING!
SWISH
BESIDES, IF I DON'T KEEP PRACTICING, HUBERT WILL BEAT ME!
ARF
HUBERT DOESN'T WANT YOUR TROPHIES, HE WANTS YOUR KINGDOM!
AND THE BARONS ARE BEHIND HIM. YOU'VE GOT TO COURT THEM.
ARF ARF
I CAN'T FORCE THEM TO RESPECT ME.
HERE, BENTON. LET'S GET A LITTLE EXERCISE.
WELL... I'M NOT VERY GOOD...
AH, I LOVE THIS! I ONLY FEEL ALIVE WITH A SWORD IN MY HAND!
KEEP YOUR KNEES BENT... AND POINT THE TIP AT MY EYES.

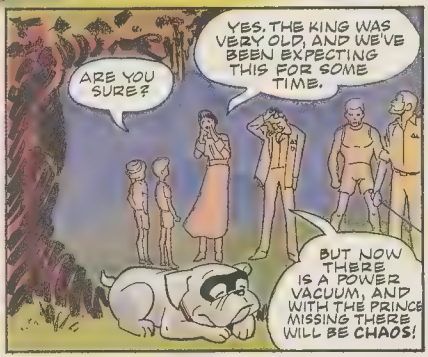
KEEP YOUR POINT UP! SEE, YOU'RE NOT SO...
ARF
RARK!
SSKIING!
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU'RE TERRIBLE!
NEXT TIME I GET TO PICK THE WEAPONS... QUADRATIC EQUATIONS!
AH, MY FRIEND, IF ONLY EVERYTHING IN LIFE WERE SO SIMPLE... IF ONLY...
UM, DOCTOR QUEST... THE PRINCE JUST VANISHED IN A PILLAR OF BLUE FLAME!
THANK YOU, HADJI. I NOTICED.

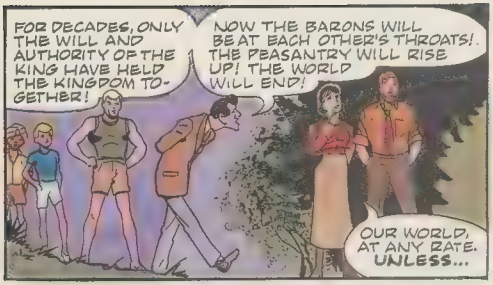

THIS IS INCREDIBLE! FANTASTIC! AND YET...
YOU'VE THOUGHT OF IT, TOO. IT'S EXACTLY THE SORT OF THING DUKE HUBERT WOULD DO.
WHO IS THIS HUBERT?

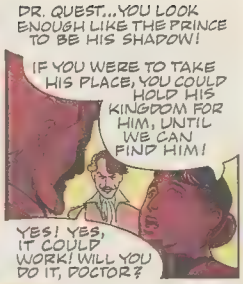

THE PRINCE'S COUSIN AND NEXT IN LINE TO THE THRONE. I'VE NO IDEA WHAT MAGIC HE'S USED AGAINST THE PRINCE, BUT THERE WOULD BE NO REASON TO ATTACK HIM DIRECTLY, UNLESS...


BONG
BONG
BONG

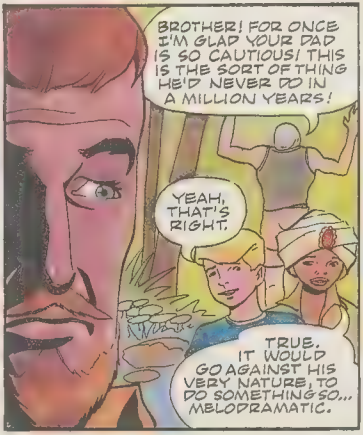
THE BELLS!
THE KING IS DEAD!


ARE YOU SURE?
YES. THE KING WAS VERY OLD, AND WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING THIS FOR SOME TIME.
BUT NOW THERE IS A POWER VACUUM, AND WITH THE PRINCE MISSING THERE WILL BE CHAOS!


FOR DECADES, ONLY THE WILL AND AUTHORITY OF THE KING HAVE HELD THE KINGDOM TOGETHER!
NOW THE BARONS WILL BEAT EACH OTHER'S THROATS! THE PEASANTRY WILL RISE UP! THE WORLD WILL END!
OUR WORLD, AT ANY RATE. UNLESS...


DR. QUEST...YOU LOOK ENOUGH LIKE THE PRINCE TO BE HIS SHADOW!
IF YOU WERE TO TAKE HIS PLACE, YOU COULD HOLD HIS KINGDOM FOR HIM, UNTIL WE CAN FIND HIM!
YES! YES, IT COULD WORK! WILL YOU DO IT, DOCTOR?

I REALIZE THIS IS A LOT TO ASK...
I JUST DON'T KNOW. I LIKE ANTHONY... BUT I DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN MONARCHY, AND YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BE A KING!
THIS WHOLE THING IS INSANE.


BROTHER! FOR ONCE I'M GLAD YOUR DAD IS SO CAUTIOUS! THIS IS THE SORT OF THING HE'D NEVER DO IN A MILLION YEARS!
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.
TRUE. IT WOULD GO AGAINST HIS VERY NATURE; TO DO SOMETHING SO... MELODRAMATIC.

LT. HOPELY, YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF AN ACTOR!
WONDERFUL!
WHAT?!

DOC! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND? THIS IS LUNACY!
SORRY, RACE. I GUESS IT JUST APPEALS TO MY WILD, SPONTANEOUS NATURE.
HORSES... THERE ARE RIDERS COMING...
FORWARD, MEN! AND REMEMBER... THE PRINCE MUST BE TAKEN, BUT HE IS NOT TO BE HARMED!

HMM. TOO QUIET. I DON'T LIKE THIS...
TONG
OUCH! IT STINGS! WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?
THE HORSES ARE PANICKING!
SURRENDER! YOU ARE TOTALLY SURROUNDED!
IT'S WORKING! I HOPE HADJI HAS ENOUGH PEBBLES!
KEEP YOUR HEADS! THIS IS ONLY...

IT CAME FROM OVER THERE! FIX BAYONETS AND PREPARE TO CHARGE!
BUT I THINK THE VOICE CAME FROM OVER...
..THHEERRRRE!
YAAH! YAAH!
LOOK OUT!
BLANG! BLANG!
NO, NO, YOU FOOLS! THE PRINCE MUST BE TAKEN ALIVE!
AFTER THEM! QUICKLY!

THE CHASE IS ON! PURSUED AND PURSUERS DISAPPEAR IN A SWIRL OF DUST. AND THEN...
AND THERE THEY GO! I WONDER IF IT WAS SOMETHING WE SAID...!
I HOPE DAD CAN OUTRUN THEM.
HE HAD A GOOD START ON THEM, JONNY.
I AM AFRAID THAT THOSE SOLDIERS ARE THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES, MY FRIENDS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, FRITT?
ONLY ONE MAN COULD BE SO BOLD AS TO ATTACK THE PRINCE... DUKE HUBERT OF RENCIA!
AND IF THE KING IS DEAD, THEN THERE WILL BE NONE TO STOP HIM. IT WILL BE CIVIL WAR!
I GREATLY FEAR WHAT YOUR DOCTOR QUEST WILL FIND WHEN HE REACHES THE CAPITAL...

I THINK WE LOST THEM.
FOR THE MOMENT. THEY WILL NOT GIVE UP, THOUGH. AS SOON AS YOU ARE PREPARED, WE MUST RIDE TO THE CAPITAL!

SOMEWHAT LATER...
THIS VEGETATION IS TRULY AMAZING! IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SWEAR WE WERE IN THE BALKANS.
YES, THE KING STROVE FOR DECADES TO MAKE THIS ISLAND A PERFECT DUPLICATE OF OUR BELOVED STARKGRAU.
HOLD STILL...

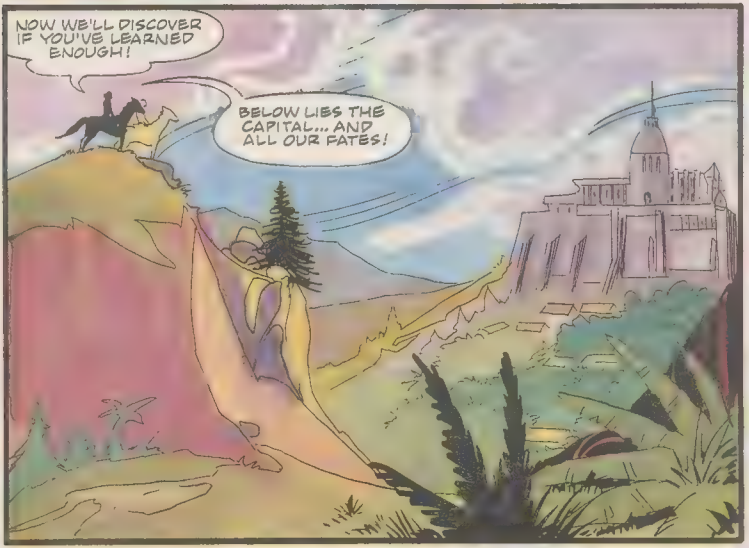
THERE. PERFECT! NO ONE WILL KNOW YOU ARE NOT ANTHONY,.. THE PRINCE!
I CERTAINLY HOPE SO!
HAVE YOU KNOWN THE PRINCE LONG?

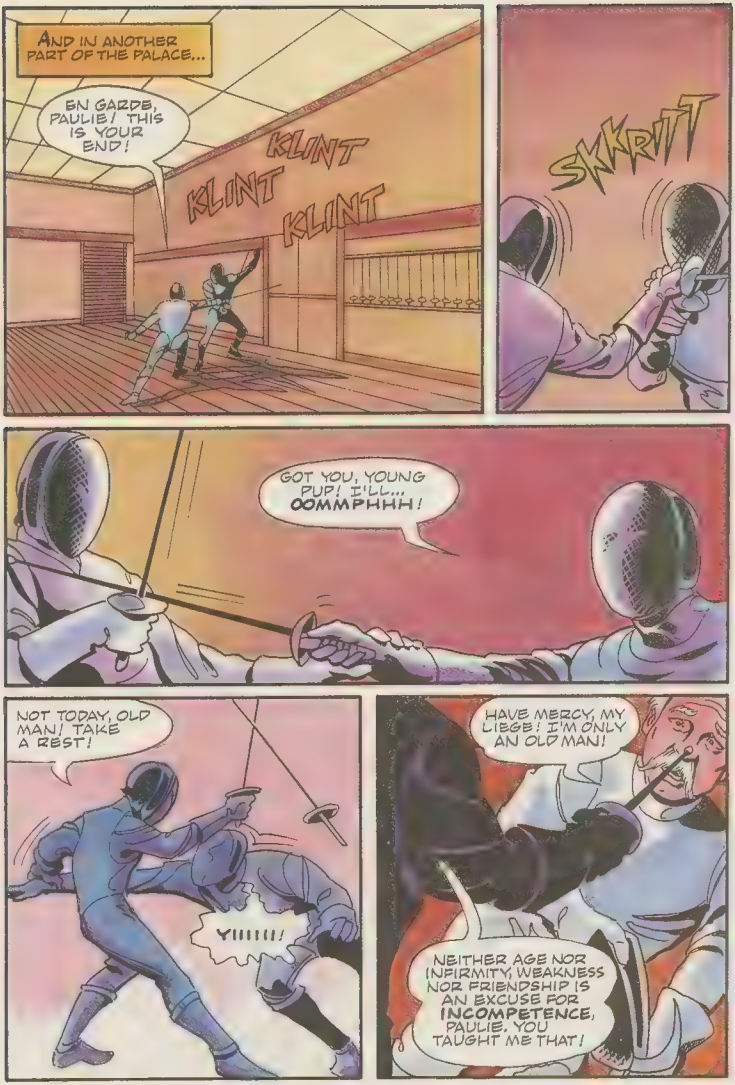
LONG ENOUGH. MY FAMILY HAS SERVED THE MONARCHY FOR GENERATIONS.
COME. AS WE RIDE, I WILL GIVE YOU AS MANY DETAILS OF THE PRINCE'S LIFE AS I CAN.

AND SO...
AND YOUR FATHER'S UNCLE IS...?
FREDRICK, DUKE OF ANSEW. HE LIKES HUNTING AND CARDS, BUT HATES DINNER PARTIES.

TIME PASSES...
AND HIS NEPHEW...?
CHARLES, BUT HE LIKES TO BE CALLED "CHUCK." HE'S THE FOURTH EARL OF DUNWAY.
HE LIKES HUNTING AND DINNER PARTIES, AND HATES CARDS...

AND FINALLY...
...ELINOR, DUCHESS OF PARNT. NICKNAME: "WIGGLES." HATES HUNTING... LIKES CARDS AND DINNER PARTIES...
EXCELLENT, DOCTOR. YOUR MEMORY IS BETTER THAN I'D HOPED.
WELL, I'VE BEEN MEMORIZING DATA ALL MY LIFE.

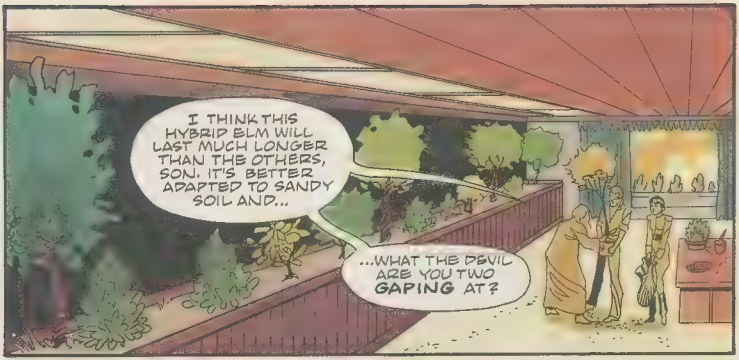

NOW WE'LL DISCOVER IF YOU'VE LEARNED ENOUGH!
BELOW LIES THE CAPITAL... AND ALL OUR FATES!

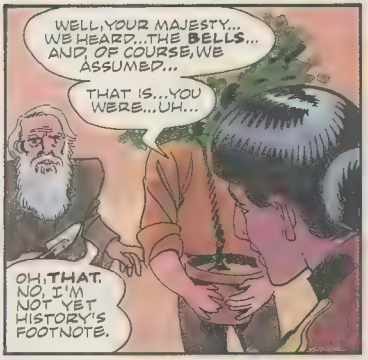

AND IN ANOTHER PART OF THE PALACE...
EN GARDE, PAULIE! THIS IS YOUR END!
KLINT
KLINT
KLINT
SKKRITT
GOT YOU, YOUNG PUP! I'LL... OOMMPHHH!
NOT TODAY, OLD MAN! TAKE A REST!
YIIIIII!
HAVE MERCY, MY LIEGE! I'M ONLY AN OLD MAN!
NEITHER AGE NOR INFIRMITY, WEAKNESS NOR FRIENDSHIP IS AN EXCUSE FOR INCOMPETENCE, PAULIE. YOU TAUGHT ME THAT!

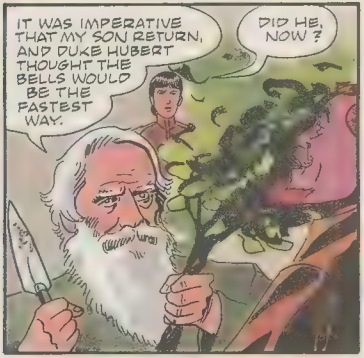
THEN I TAUGHT YOU TOO WELL, MY LORD.
NAY. IF I HADN'T LEARNED THAT LIFE IS A BATTLE AND ONLY STRENGTH AND WILL COUNT, I'D BE NO BETTER THAN MY WORM OF A COUSIN.
COME, AND I'LL STAND YOU FOR CAKES AND ALE!
WHERE IS THE PRINCE, DO YOU THINK? COULD HE NOT HAVE HEARD THE BELLS?
I THINK... WE'VE SEEN THE LAST OF DEAR ANTHONY FOR A WHILE.
IN FACT, I'D PREDICT THAT HE'LL BE GONE LONG ENOUGH FOR THE BARONS TO ELECT A REAL MAN AS KING!
PITY YOU'RE NOT AS GOOD AT FORTUNE-TELLING AS YOU ARE AT SWORDPLAY, COUSIN!
AND I WOULDN'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE ON THE THRONE JUST YET. YOU COULD FALL OFF AND HURT YOURSELF!
ANTHONY! BUT... BUT...

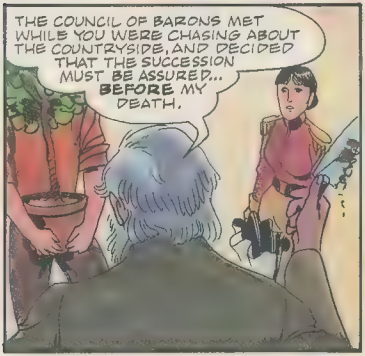
IF I FALL, I'LL NOT BE THE ONLY ONE HURT. DEPEND ON IT!
I DON'T DOUBT YOUR ABILITY TO CAUSE PAIN, HUBERT. IT'S YOUR OTHER TALENTS I HAVE MY DOUBTS ABOUT!
WOULD YOU HAVE ME BRAWL ON THE DAY OF MY FATHER'S DEATH?
THEN LET US SETTLE YOUR DOUBTS, HERE AND NOW!
UH-OH. YOU MAY HAVE PUSHED HIM TOO FAR, BENTON, MY BOY.
YOUR FATHER'S... OH, YES... I'D SEE TO THAT RIGHT AWAY, WERE I YOU, HA HA! RIGHT AWAY.
YOU GOT HIM OFF BALANCE!
AND ALMOST GOT MYSELF KILLED! I WONDER WHAT WAS SO FUNNY...?
I'M NOT SURE... IT'S ODD THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF MOURNING...
I'VE COME TO--
GO RIGHT IN, YOUR HIGHNESS.
SO YOU'RE FINALLY HERE, EH? WELL, GET OVER HERE AND TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF THIS ELM TREE!
LOOK SHOCKED. THAT'S YOUR FATHER, THE KING, AND HE'S ALIVE!

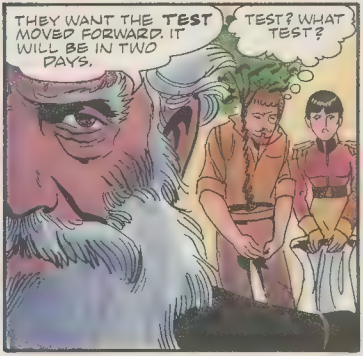
AND OUTSIDE THE PALACE...
WELL, THAT'S WHAT I SAW. PRINCE ANTHONY CAME RIDING INTO THE COURTYARD BIG AS LIFE.
HE WASN'T DRUNK, BUT I RECOGNIZED HIM ANYWAY.
WELL, THE RUMORS I HEARD HAD HIM MISSING OR DEAD!
HE AIN'T MISSING, 'CAUSE I SEEN HIM! AND I KNOW WHAT...
NOW, THAT'S FUNNY... I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEBODY RUNNING ACROSS THAT FIELD.
WHAT? WHERE? THERE'S NOBODY THERE NOW.
I CAN SEE THAT, CAN'T I? LOOKED LIKE A LITTLE BLOND BOY AND A SMALL, WHITE BULLDOG.
WE'D SEE 'EM IF THEY WERE AROUND...
FACT IS, TO GET BY US, THEY'D HAVE TO FLY!'

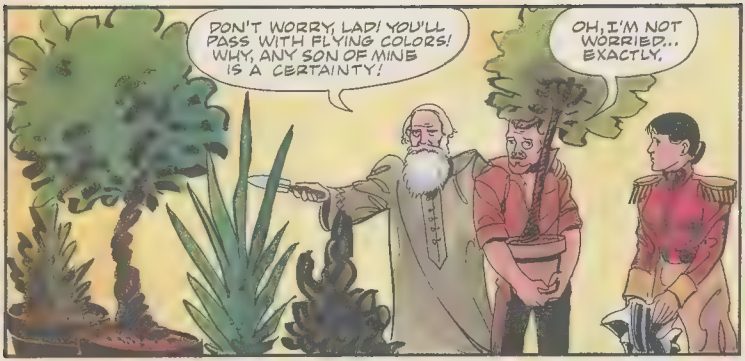

I THINK THIS HYBRID ELM WILL LAST MUCH LONGER THAN THE OTHERS, SON. IT'S BETTER ADAPTED TO SANDY SOIL AND...
...WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU TWO GAPING AT?

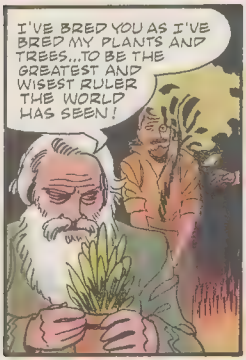

WELL, YOUR MAJESTY... WE HEARD...THE BELLS... AND, OF COURSE, WE ASSUMED...
THAT IS...YOU WERE...UH...
OH, THAT. NO, I'M NOT YET HISTORY'S FOOTNOTE.

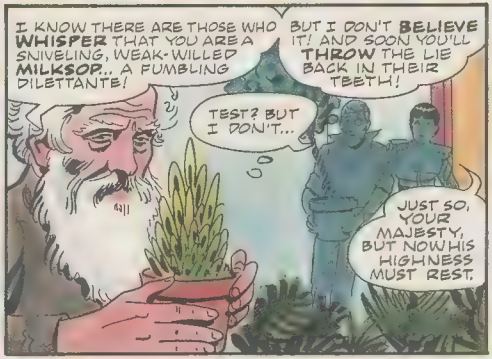

IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT MY SON RETURN, AND DUKE HUBERT THOUGHT THE BELLS WOULD BE THE FASTEST WAY.
DID HE, NOW?


THE COUNCIL OF BARONS MET WHILE YOU WERE CHASING ABOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE, AND DECIDED THAT THE SUCCESSION MUST BE ASSURED... BEFORE MY DEATH.

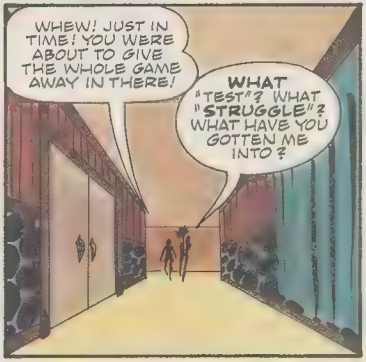

THEY WANT THE TEST MOVED FORWARD. IT WILL BE IN TWO DAYS.
TEST? WHAT TEST?

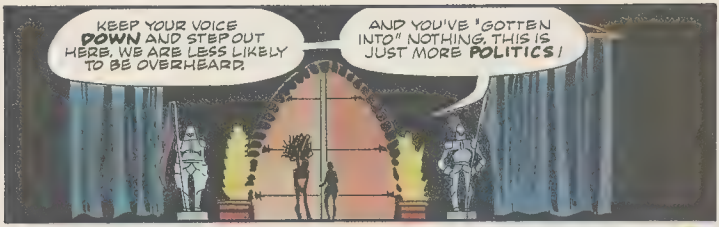

DON'T WORRY, LAD! YOU'LL PASS WITH FLYING COLORS! WHY, ANY SON OF MINE IS A CERTAINTY!
OH, I'M NOT WORRIED... EXACTLY.

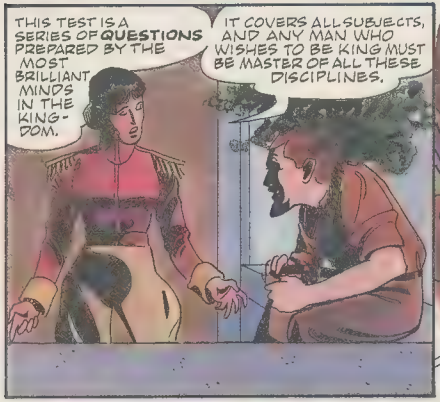

I'VE BRED YOU AS I'VE BRED MY PLANTS AND TREES...TO BE THE GREATEST AND WISEST RULER THE WORLD HAS SEEN!


I KNOW THERE ARE THOSE WHO WHISPER THAT YOU ARE A SNIVELING, WEAK-WILLED MILKSOP... A FUMBLING DILETTANTE!
BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT! AND SOON YOU'LL THROW THE LIE BACK IN THEIR TEETH!
TEST? BUT I DON'T...
JUST SO, YOUR MAJESTY, BUT NOW HIS HIGHNESS MUST REST.

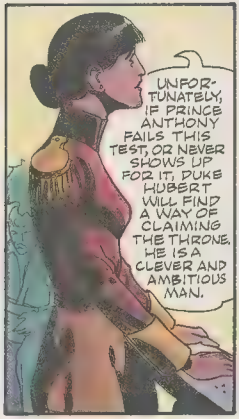
HE MUST BE WELL RESTED FOR THE STRUGGLE AHEAD.
JUST SO. JUST SO! WE'LL TALK AGAIN LATER.

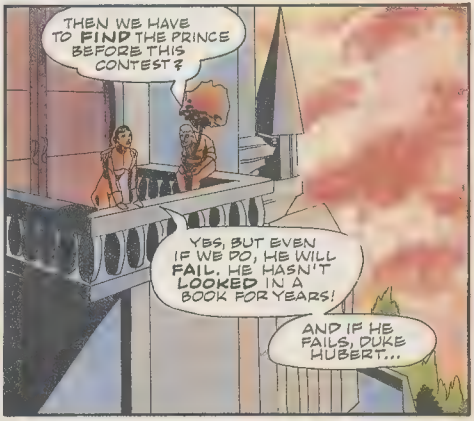

WHEW! JUST IN TIME! YOU WERE ABOUT TO GIVE THE WHOLE GAME AWAY IN THERE!
WHAT "TEST"? WHAT "STRUGGLE"? WHAT HAVE YOU GOTTEN ME INTO?


KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN AND STEP OUT HERB. WE ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE OVERHEARD.
AND YOU'VE "GOTTEN INTO" NOTHING. THIS IS JUST MORE POLITICS!

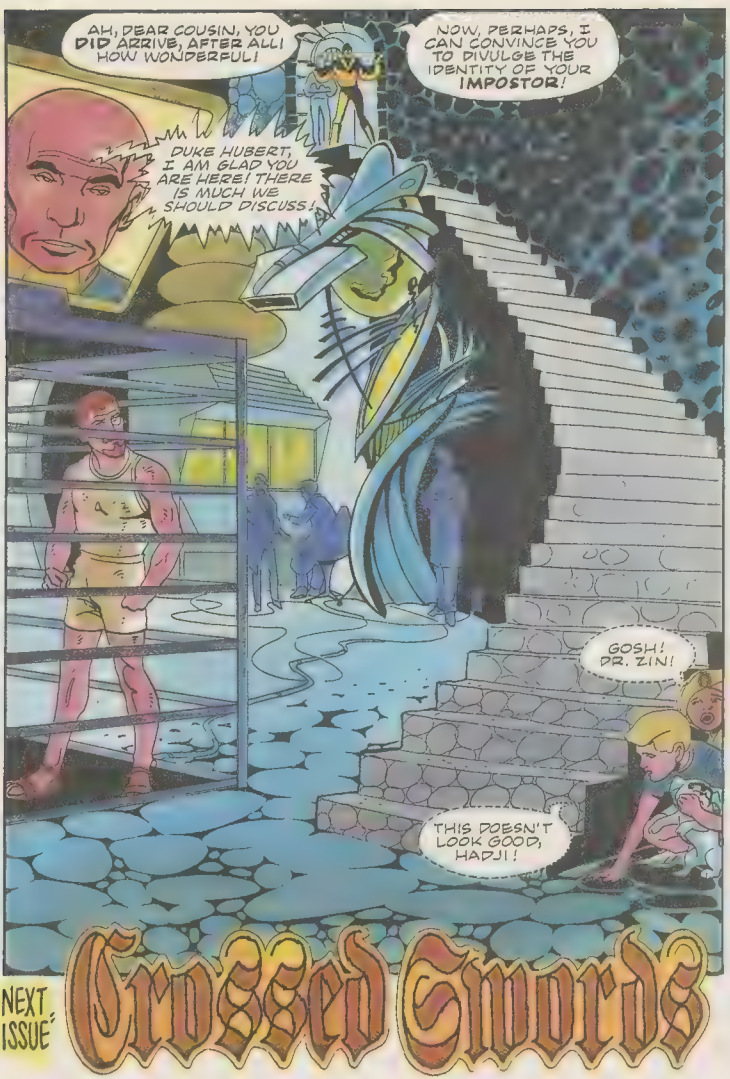

THIS TEST IS A SERIES OF QUESTIONS PREPARED BY THE MOST BRILLIANT MINDS IN THE KING-DOM.
IT COVERS ALL SUBJECTS, AND ANY MAN WHO WISHES TO BE KING MUST BE MASTER OF ALL THESE DISCIPLINES.

YOUR KING MUST KNOW EVERYTHING? NO WONDER ANTHONY HAD TO STUDY ALL THE TIME.
THE KING FEARED THAT AN UNWORTHY SON WOULD UNDO ALL HIS WORK.


UNFOR-TUNATELY, IF PRINCE ANTHONY FAILS THIS TEST, OR NEVER SHOWS UP FOR IT, DUKE HUBERT WILL FIND A WAY OF CLAIMING THE THRONE. HE IS A CLEVER AND AMBITIOUS MAN.


THEN WE HAVE TO FIND THE PRINCE BEFORE THIS CONTEST?
YES, BUT EVEN IF WE DO, HE WILL FAIL. HE HASN'T LOOKED IN A BOOK FOR YEARS!
AND IF HE FAILS, DUKE HUBERT...

"...WILL EAT HIM ALIVE!"
BUT SURELY THE MAGIC WORKED, MY LORD?
IT MUST HAVE. I EVEN SENT A COMPANY OF MEN TO BE DOUBLY SURE, BUT THEY HAVEN'T RETURNED.. AND THERE WAS MY DEAR COUSIN, BOLD AS LIFE, MOCKING ME!
ALL MY LIFE, ANTHONY HAS PLAYED THE FOOL AND THE WASTREL, WHILE I, A BETTER MAN, CAPERED IN HIS SHADOW AND ATE HIS LEAVINGS!
WELL, NO LONGER!
WITH MY STRENGTH, MY WILL, AND MY NEW ALLY, I SHALL RIP AWAY THIS KINGDOM FOR MY OWN AND FOUND MY OWN DYNASTY!
AND NO ONE WILL STOP ME!


AH, DEAR COUSIN, YOU DID ARRIVE, AFTER ALL! HOW WONDERFUL!
NOW, PERHAPS, I CAN CONVINCE YOU TO DIVULGE THE IDENTITY OF YOUR IMPOSTOR!
DUKE HUBERT, I AM GLAD YOU ARE HERE! THERE IS MUCH WE SHOULD DISCUSS!
GOSH! DR. ZIN!
THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD, HADJI!
NEXT ISSUE
Crossed Swords

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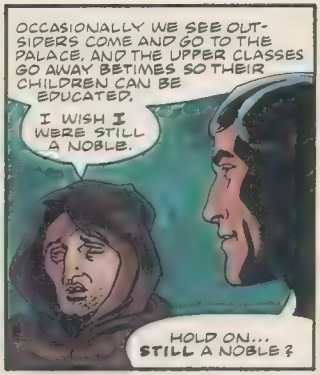
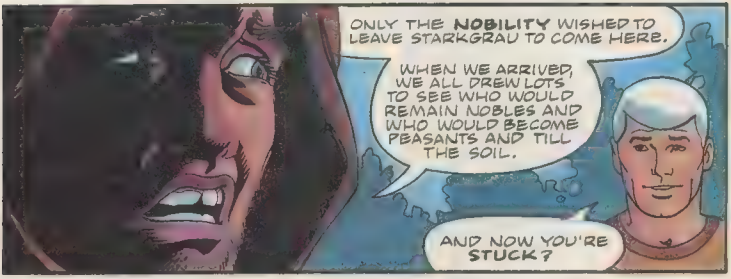
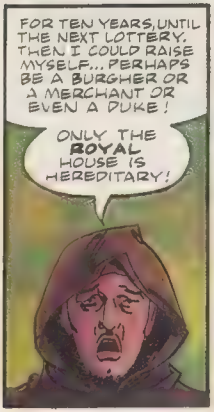
Hummphh. IS IT MORN--?
Shh. DUKE HUBERT'S COME BACK!
NO, BUT I'M NOT WORRIED. ONE OR THE OTHER OF YOU WILL FAIL THE TEST TOMORROW AND BE DISOWNED. THAT'S ALL I CARE ABOUT!
GOSH! LAST NIGHT HUBERT AND DR. ZIN PLOTTED ABOUT TAKING OVER THE COUNTRY UNTIL WE FELL ASLEEP. HOPE HUBERT LEAVES SOON SO WE CAN RESCUE PRINCE ANTHONY!
HUBERT, YOUR AMBITION WILL DESTROY THIS KINGDOM!
MY STRENGTH AND WILL WILL BE THE SAVING OF IT!
I WILL SAVE OUR COUNTRY FROM YOUR DEGENERACY AND WEAKNESS, AND THERE IS NO ONE WHO CAN STOP ME!
THIS IS A FINE MESS, ANTHONY! LOCKED AWAY, HELPLESS... WHILE A STRANGER IS LEFT TO SAVE MY KINGDOM!
HI, PRINCE ANTHONY!
THIS IS A WONDERFUL PLACE!
JONNY! HADJI! SO, YOUR FATHER IS IMPERSONATING ME!
I'M GLAD YOU'RE ENJOYING YOURSELVES!
OH, YEAH, IT'S SWELL. WE GOT TO SLEEP IN A REAL DUNGEON AND EVERYTHING!
I JUST HOPE RACE IS DOING ALL RIGHT... KEEPING WATCH...

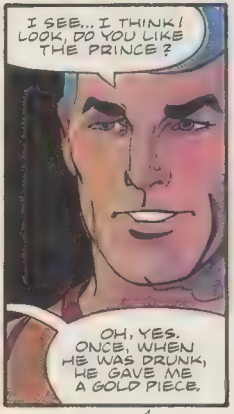
"SURE HE IS, HADJI. HE'S A GOVERNMENT AGENT AN' ALL. HE PROB'LY LOVES BEING OUTDOORS."
OOOHHHH...
DO I FEEL TERRIBLE!
SO COLD. SOAKED TO THE SKIN WITH DEW. I THOUGHT DESERT ISLANDS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE WARM!
GOT TO MOVE... PROBABLY CRIPPLED FOR LIFE! STICKS AND STONES DID BREAK MY BONES!
ALL MY SURVIVAL RATIONS ARE HERE... MY DISGUISE KIT...
NOW ALL I NEED ARE SOME LOCAL DUDS TO GET INTO THE CASTLE.
HMMMMMM...

HO, STRANGER. HOW DO YOU FARE?
NOT BADLY. YOU DON'T SEEM VERY SURPRISED TO SEE A STRANGER AROUND HERE.

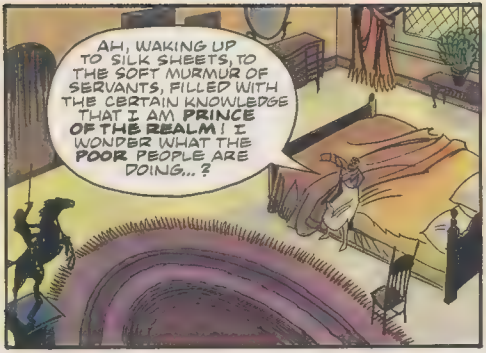

OCCASIONALLY WE SEE OUTSIDERS COME AND GO TO THE PALACE. AND THE UPPER CLASSES GO AWAY BETIMES SO THEIR CHILDREN CAN BE EDUCATED.
I WISH I WERE STILL A NOBLE.
HOLD ON... STILL A NOBLE?

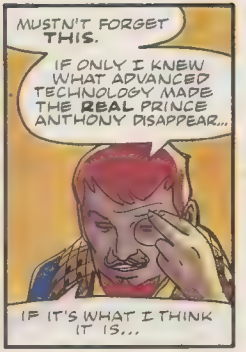

ONLY THE NOBILITY WISHED TO LEAVE STARKGRAU TO COME HERE.
WHEN WE ARRIVED, WE ALL DREW LOTS TO SEE WHO WOULD REMAIN NOBLES AND WHO WOULD BECOME PEASANTS AND TILL THE SOIL.
AND NOW YOU'RE STUCK?

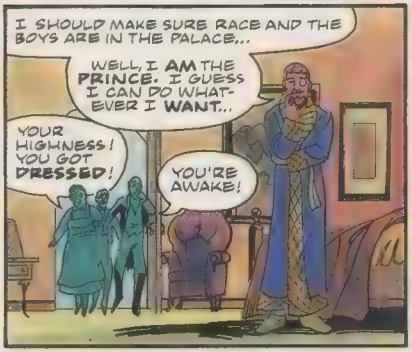

FOR TEN YEARS, UNTIL THE NEXT LOTTERY. THEN I COULD RAISE MYSELF... PERHAPS BE A BURGHER OR A MERCHANT OR EVEN A DUKE!
ONLY THE ROYAL HOUSE IS HEREDITARY!

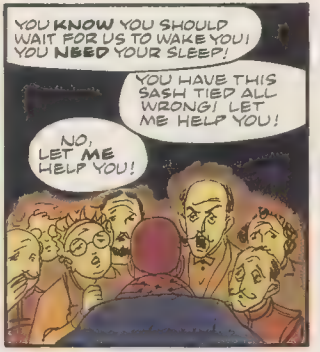

I SEE... I THINK! LOOK, DO YOU LIKE THE PRINCE?
OH, YES. ONCE, WHEN HE WAS DRUNK, HE GAVE ME A GOLD PIECE.

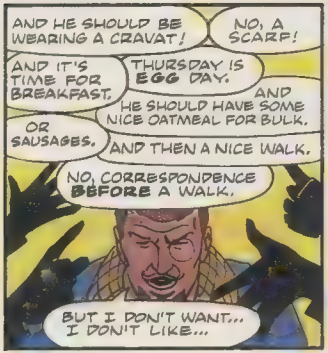
I'M ON KIND OF A MISSION FOR THE PRINCE, BUT I NEED TO GET INTO THE PALACE. HOW MUCH, IF YOU'LL CHANGE CLOTHES WITH ME?
NOW, THAT'S A VERY INTERESTING QUESTION...

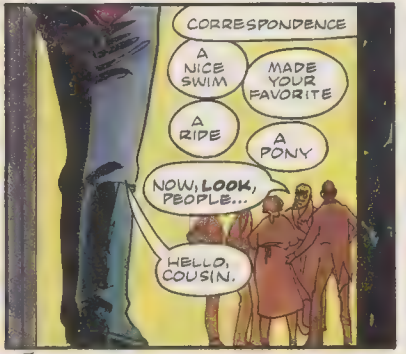

AH, WAKING UP TO SILK SHEETS, TO THE SOFT MURMUR OF SERVANTS, FILLED WITH THE CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE THAT I AM **PRINCE OF THE REALM**! I WONDER WHAT THE **POOR** PEOPLE ARE DOING...?


MUSTN'T FORGET **THIS**.
IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY MADE THE **REAL** PRINCE ANTHONY DISAPPEAR...
IF IT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS...

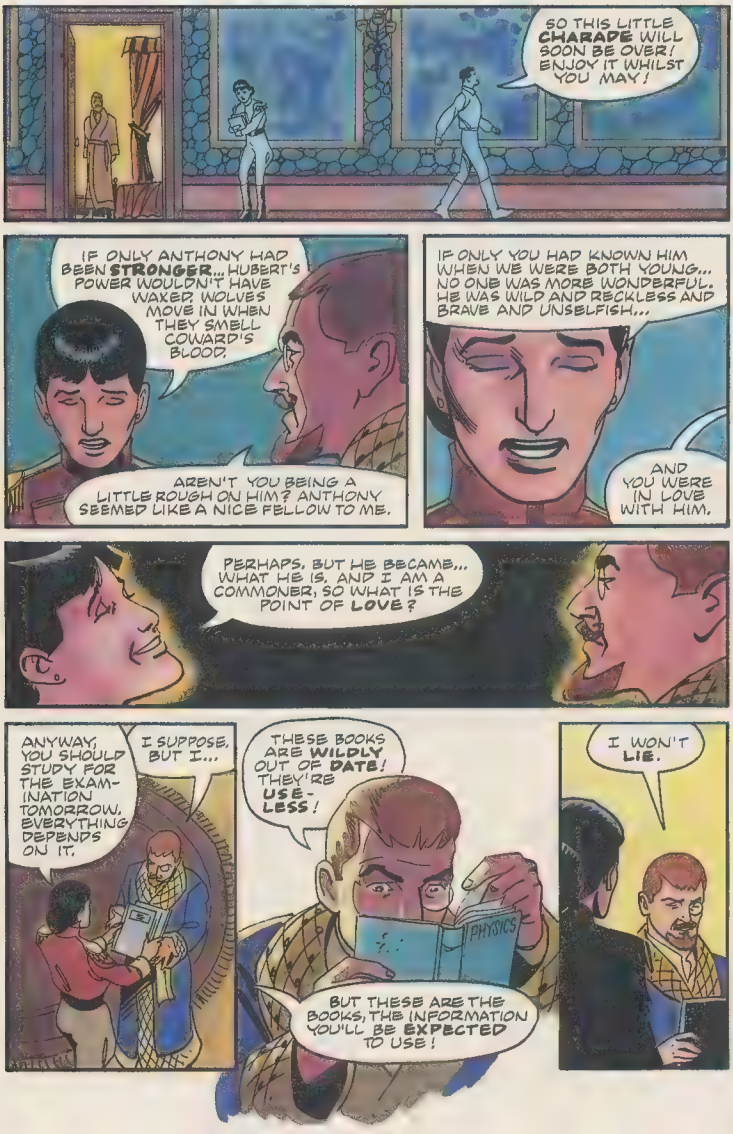

I SHOULD MAKE SURE RACE AND THE BOYS ARE IN THE PALACE...
WELL, I **AM** THE **PRINCE**. I GUESS I CAN DO WHATEVER I **WANT**...
YOUR HIGHNESS! YOU GOT **DRESSED**!
YOU'RE AWAKE!


YOU **KNOW** YOU SHOULD WAIT FOR US TO WAKE YOU! YOU **NEED** YOUR SLEEP!
YOU HAVE THIS SASH TIED ALL WRONG! LET ME HELP YOU!
NO, LET **ME** HELP YOU!

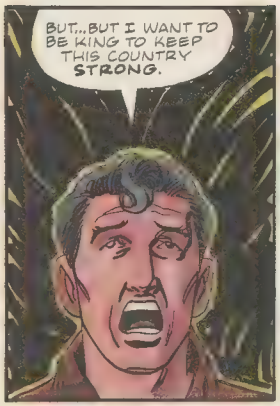

AND HE SHOULD BE WEARING A CRAVAT!
NO, A SCARF!
AND IT'S TIME FOR BREAKFAST.
THURSDAY IS **EGG** DAY.
AND HE SHOULD HAVE SOME NICE OATMEAL FOR BULK.
OR SAUSAGES.
AND THEN A NICE WALK.
NO, CORRESPONDENCE **BEFORE** A WALK.
BUT I DON'T WANT... I DON'T LIKE...


CORRESPONDENCE
A NICE SWIM
MADE YOUR FAVORITE
A RIDE
A PONY
NOW, **LOOK**, PEOPLE...
HELLO, COUSIN.

EVERYONE, LEAVE. NOW.
YOU SEE, ANTHONY, WHAT THEY RESPECT IS STRENGTH.
I'M GLAD MY PEOPLE DON'T FEAR ME!
AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES YOU WORTHLESS, AS A KING AND A MAN.
AND DO YOU THINK YOU'D MAKE A BETTER KING, HUBERT?
I? WHY, THAT WOULD BE TREASON, ANTHONY. AND WE MUST ALWAYS OBSERVE THE FORMALITIES...
I WONDER JUST WHAT THE FORMALITIES WOULD BE IN THIS SITUATION: POISON IN THE WINE GLASS? A DAGGER IN THE BACK?
NOTHING SO CRUDE, MY DEAR COUSIN... IF YOU ARE MY COUSIN.
WHEN YOU FAIL THE TEST TOMORROW, AS YOU WILL, THE BARONS WILL DEMAND A STRONGER, MORE ABLE KING... AND I WILL RELUCTANTLY ACCEPT.


SO THIS LITTLE CHARADE WILL SOON BE OVER! ENJOY IT WHILST YOU MAY!
IF ONLY ANTHONY HAD BEEN STRONGER... HUBERT'S POWER WOULDN'T HAVE WAXED. WOLVES MOVE IN WHEN THEY SMELL COWARD'S BLOOD.
AREN'T YOU BEING A LITTLE ROUGH ON HIM? ANTHONY SEEMED LIKE A NICE FELLOW TO ME.
IF ONLY YOU HAD KNOWN HIM WHEN WE WERE BOTH YOUNG... NO ONE WAS MORE WONDERFUL. HE WAS WILD AND RECKLESS AND BRAVE AND UNSELFISH...
AND YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH HIM.
PERHAPS, BUT HE BECAME... WHAT HE IS, AND I AM A COMMONER; SO WHAT IS THE POINT OF LOVE?
ANYWAY, YOU SHOULD STUDY FOR THE EXAMINATION TOMORROW. EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON IT.
I SUPPOSE, BUT I...
THESE BOOKS ARE WILDLY OUT OF DATE! THEY'RE USE-LESS!
PHYSICS
BUT THESE ARE THE BOOKS, THE INFORMATION YOU'LL BE EXPECTED TO USE!
I WON'T LIE.

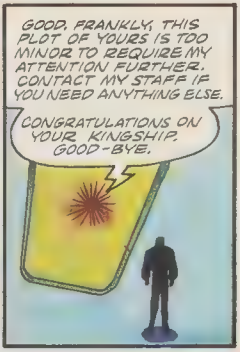
"THEN YOU WILL LOSE."
THE LOCK HAS BEEN WELDED SHUT. WE CANNOT OPEN IT!
THEN IT'S USELESS. HUBERT'S WON.
RRRR RRR
SOMEONE'S COMING!
AH, COUSIN. I'M GLAD YOU'RE AWAKE. I JUST HAD THE MOST INVIGORATING CHAT WITH YOU, UPSTAIRS.
I WISH I KNEW WHICH WAS--
DUKE HUBERT! I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU!
YOU DID NOT REPORT THIS NOON! HOW IS THE PROJECT PROGRESSING?
I WILL DECIDE ON THE NEED. I HAVE INVESTED CONSIDERABLE EFFORT INTO THIS SCHEME OF YOURS! I MEAN TO SEE IT BLOSSOM!
IT CANNOT FAIL! WHEN I AM KING...
VERY WELL, DR. ZIN, THAT'S WHY THERE WAS NO NEED TO BOTHER--
WHEN YOU ARE "KING," YOU WILL BE MY KING! I WILL SEND AN ADMINISTRATOR TO MAKE LOCAL POLICY AND CONVEY MY ORDERS TO YOU!

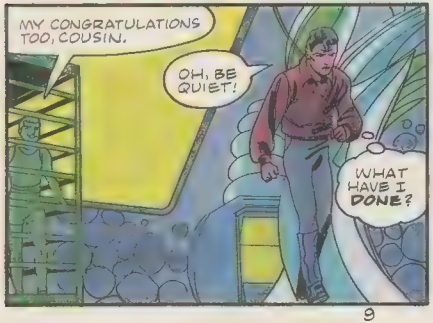

BUT...BUT I WANT TO BE KING TO KEEP THIS COUNTRY **STRONG.**

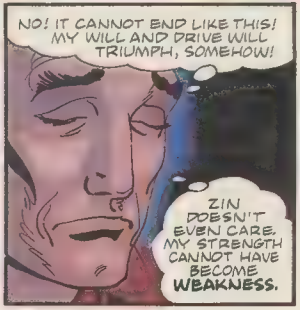
AND STRONG IT SHALL **BE,** AS A COG IN MY **EMPIRE.** SURELY YOU AGREE?
I... I...

BECAUSE, IF YOU DO **NOT,** I WILL REMOVE MY **MATTER-SHIFTER** AND LEAVE YOU NAKED AS A SQUALLING, MOTHERLESS BABE!

SAY "I AGREE, DR. ZIN."
I... I AGREE, DR. ZIN.


GOOD. FRANKLY, THIS PLOT OF YOURS IS TOO MINOR TO REQUIRE MY ATTENTION FURTHER. CONTACT MY STAFF IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE.
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR KINGSHIP. GOOD-BYE.

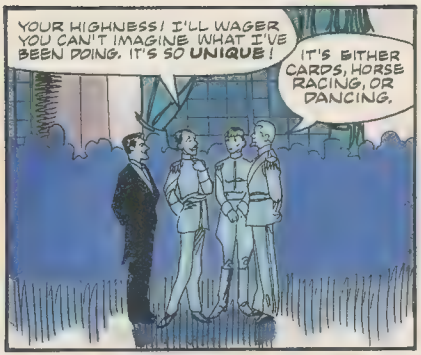

MY CONGRATULATIONS TOO, COUSIN.
OH, BE QUIET!
WHAT HAVE I **DONE?**

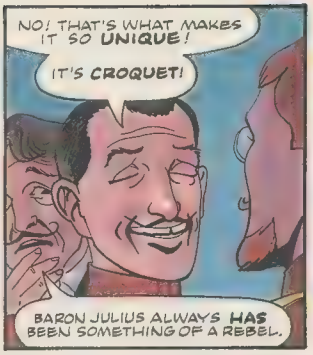

NO! IT CANNOT END LIKE THIS! MY WILL AND DRIVE WILL TRIUMPH, SOMEHOW!
ZIN DOESN'T EVEN CARE. MY STRENGTH CANNOT HAVE BECOME **WEAKNESS.**

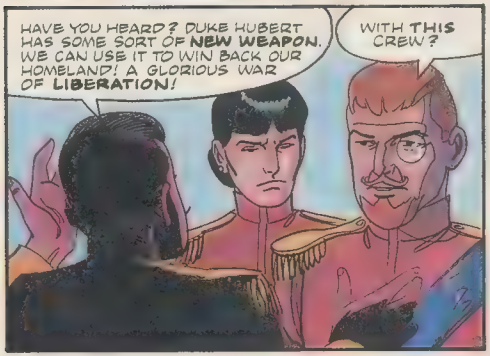
SOMETIME LATER THAT AFTERNOON...
I FINALLY SHOOK MY WATCHDOGS... OF COURSE NOW I SEEM TO BE LOST. THIS PLACE IS HUGE!
THAT'S HUBERT. I WONDER WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT?
GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT!
I'VE TALKED THAT OLD FOOL OF A KING INTO MAKING THE TEST SO HARD THAT NO ONE COULD PASS IT.
GOOD. THE BARONS ARE TERRIFIED OF ANOTHER LOTTERY!
THEY'RE TERRIFIED OF EVERYTHING! WE'RE COMMITTED NOW AND--
DUKE HUBERT! LOOK!
THIS QUITE POSSIBLY WAS NOT A GOOD IDEA...!
TOMORROW MY DEAR COUSIN PERFORMS HIS TEST. HE CAN-NOT WIN!
NOW WE CAN GET AT THE TRUTH. WHO ARE YOU? TELL ME OR I'LL...
SO, HERE YOU ARE!

THE KING!
ANTHONY! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!
WHAT'S THIS, THEN?
WHY, YOU'RE RIGHT, COUSIN, THIS DOES NEED SHARPENING!
FATHER, LET'S WALK THROUGH THE GARDENS. I FEEL THE NEED OF FRESH AIR!
SON, I'VE COME TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE EXAMINATION TOMORROW.
WELL, I'LL DO THE BEST I CAN, FATHER...
THAT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH! YOU MUST TRIUMPH! YOU MUST BE SUPERIOR!
YOU ARE MY SON!
BUT, FATHER...
I DON'T MEAN TO BE UNKIND, BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT YOU ARE A SPOILED AND PAMPERED FAILURE, BUT IF YOU FAIL THIS TIME, OUR KINGDOM COULD BE IN PERIL!
MY LIFE'S WORK WILL BE IN RUINS!
YOU HAVE THE IDEAL TRAINING, BACKGROUND, AND FAMILY...
DO NOT DISAPPOINT ME!

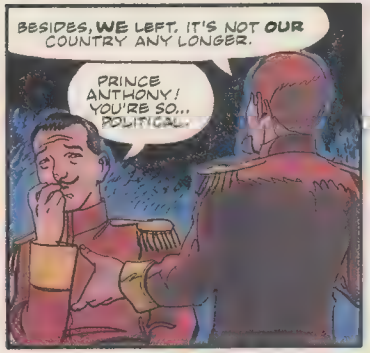
THAT NIGHT THERE IS A SMALL ENTERTAINMENT PLANNED--A SORT OF WELCOME HOME FOR THE "PRINCE."
A MESSAGE FROM RACE, HE AND THE BOYS ARE SAFE AND...
EXCUSE ME, YOUR HIGHNESS...
...DUKE GREGOR REQUESTS A WORD WITH YOU.
AH, PRINCE ANTHONY, MY BOY!
DUKE GREGOR.
DUKE GREGOR...THE HEAD OF THE COUNCIL OF BARONS!
GLAD TO SEE YOU BACK, MY BOY!
THE PEASANTS ARE BECOMING VERY LAZY, THEY REFUSE TO WORK AFTER TEN IN THE EVENING, AND THEY CONTINUALLY BEG FOOD FOR THEIR CHILDREN. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?
I THOUGHT I MIGHT ELEVATE THEM ALL TO THE COUNCIL OF BARONS! SINCE THEY WON'T WORK, THEY SHOULD FIT RIGHT IN.
WELL, I NEVER!
I NEVER GET A STRAIGHT LINE WHEN I CAN USE ONE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WE NEED THE SUPPORT OF THE COUNCIL!
THE MAN'S A FOOL!
HE'S A POWERFUL FOOL, DON'T ANGER HIM!
ANYWAY, HERE'S SOMEONE YOU SHOULD TALK TO, BARON JULIUS!

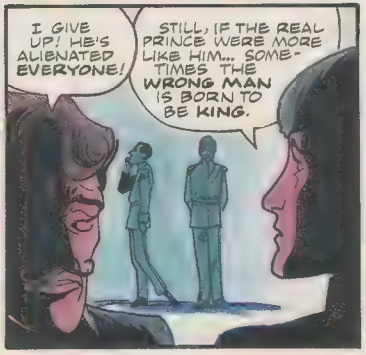

YOUR HIGHNESS! I'LL WAGER YOU CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING. IT'S SO UNIQUE!
IT'S EITHER CARDS, HORSE RACING, OR DANCING.


NO! THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SO UNIQUE!
IT'S CROQUET!
BARON JULIUS ALWAYS HAS BEEN SOMETHING OF A REBEL.


HAVE YOU HEARD? DUKE HUBERT HAS SOME SORT OF NEW WEAPON. WE CAN USE IT TO WIN BACK OUR HOMELAND! A GLORIOUS WAR OF LIBERATION!
WITH THIS CREW?

CAN YOU THINK OF ONE OF US WHO'D PREFER LEADING A CHARGE TO A RIPPING GAME OF GOLF?

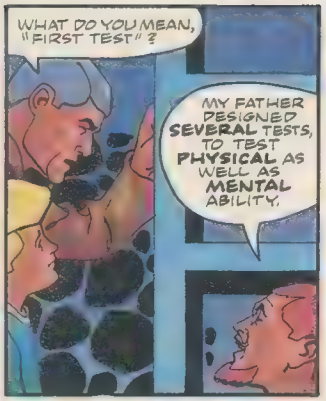

BESIDES, WE LEFT. IT'S NOT OUR COUNTRY ANY LONGER.
PRINCE ANTHONY! YOU'RE SO... POLITICAL.

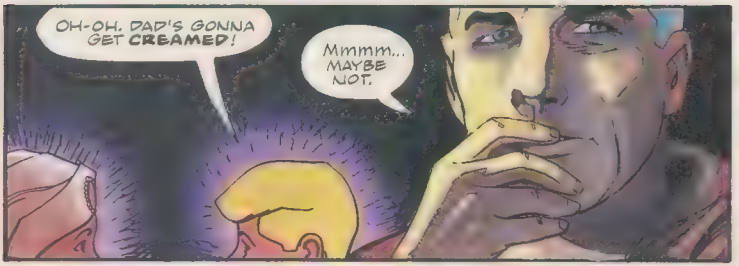

I GIVE UP! HE'S ALIENATED EVERYONE!
STILL, IF THE REAL PRINCE WERE MORE LIKE HIM... SOMETIMES THE WRONG MAN IS BORN TO BE KING.

WOOD F'R TH' PALACE.
GO ON IN.
I GET ALL THE BAD LUCK. HERE'S THE SLOP FOR THE PRISONERS DOWN-STAIRS--AND EVERYONE SO BUSY SERVING, THERE'S NO ONE BUT ME TITAKE IT!
I'LL TAKE 'ER... IF YOU GIVE ME A BIT OF A SOUP BONE.
WELL... SOUNDS ALL RIGHT. BUT COME RIGHT BACK, AND I GET TO PICK THE BONE!
DINNER, Y'R LORDSHIP.
A NEW FELLOW. I SUPPOSE YOU'RE ONE OF MY COUSIN'S PICKED MEN, TOO?
BITE YOUR TONGUE!
RACE!
RACE BANNON!

SEVERAL MINUTES PASS AS INFORMATION IS EXCHANGED.
YOU'RE RIGHT, HAJ. THIS LOCK HAS BEEN FUSED. THEY NEVER MEANT FOR THIS DOOR TO BE OPENED.
Mmm. THIS SMELLS GOOD. WHAT IS IT, RACE?
SLOP.
GEE, THIS IS PRETTY GOOD FOR SLOP!
UH-HUH. I WONDER WHAT'S IN IT...?
YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
YOU'RE TAKING THIS PRETTY WELL, YOUR HIGHNESS.
I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, DO I? WHY ARE YOU ANGRY?
BECAUSE I CAN'T SEE WHY THE DOC IS RISKING HIS LIFE TO HELP YOU.
SEEMS TO ME YOU'VE SPENT YOUR LIFE NOT HELPING YOURSELF.
I CAN'T SAY YOU'RE WRONG.
IT SEEMS MY WHOLE LIFE I'VE DONE THE WRONG THING OR BEEN THE WRONG THING. I'VE BEEN A PALE SHADOW OF MY FATHER.
IT'S NOT THAT EASY, BEING RAISED BY SOMEONE WHO DISLIKED YOU.
NO. I GUESS IT'S NOT.

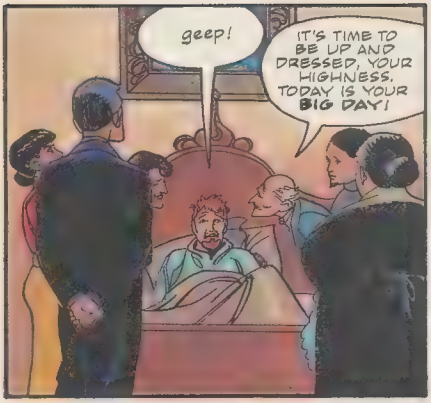
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ANYHOW, 'CAUSE MY DAD'LL ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS.
YES, HE IS VERY SMART!
AH, BUT THAT WILL BE JUST THE FIRST TEST!


WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "FIRST TEST"?
MY FATHER DESIGNED SEVERAL TESTS, TO TEST PHYSICAL AS WELL AS MENTAL ABILITY.

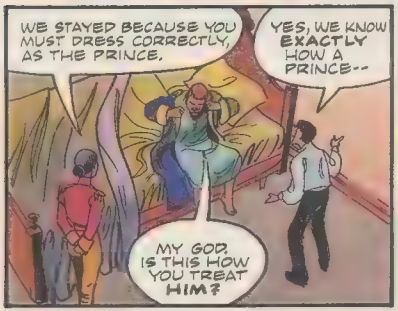

OH-OH. DAD'S GONNA GET CREAMED!
Mmmm... MAYBE NOT.

YOU BOYS HAVE BEEN DOING PRETTY WELL AVOIDING THE PALACE GUARDS... HOW'D YOU LIKE TO GO ON A LITTLE SCAVENGER HUNT FOR ME TONIGHT?
SURE!
THAT WILL BE FUN!

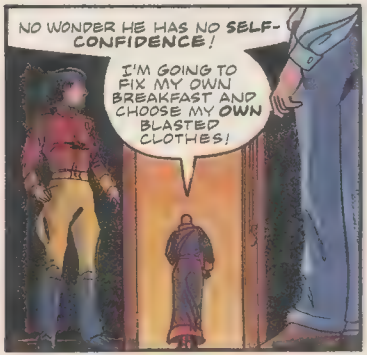
NEXT MORNING...
Ummmfff... Wharsssittt?


geep!
IT'S TIME TO BE UP AND DRESSED, YOUR HIGHNESS. TODAY IS YOUR BIG DAY!

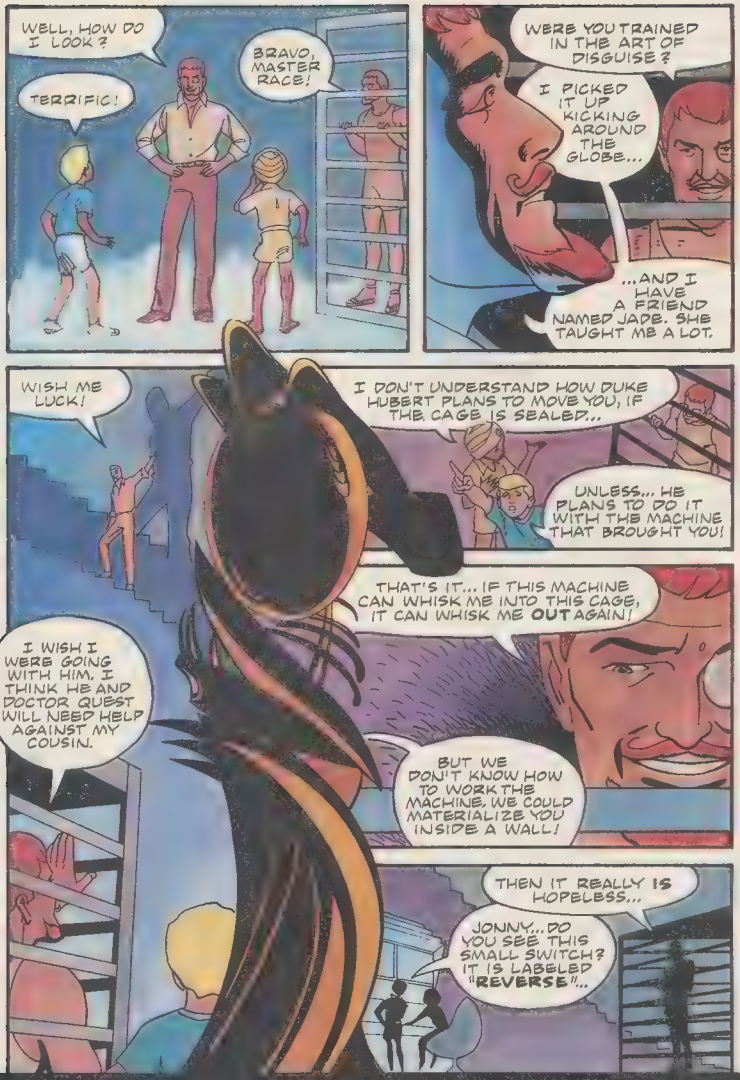
IT CERTAINLY IS, AND I'M CELEBRATING IT BY DRESSING MYSELF!
LEAVE!

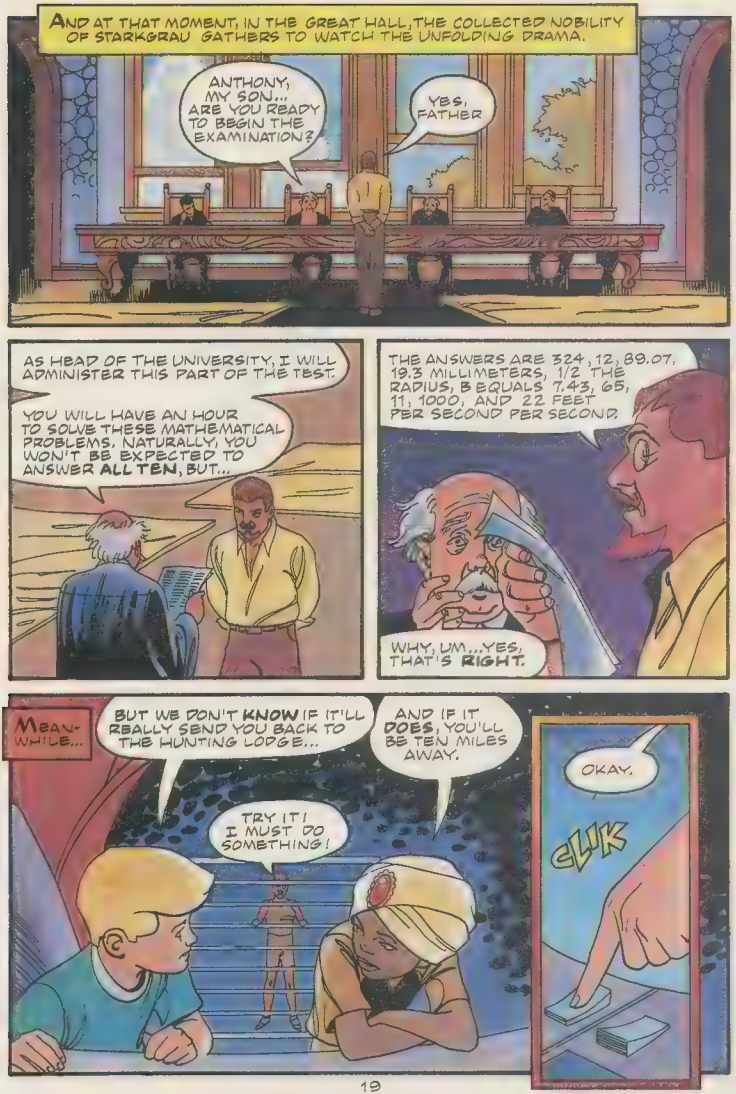

WE STAYED BECAUSE YOU MUST DRESS CORRECTLY, AS THE PRINCE.
YES, WE KNOW EXACTLY HOW A PRINCE--
MY GOD. IS THIS HOW YOU TREAT HIM?

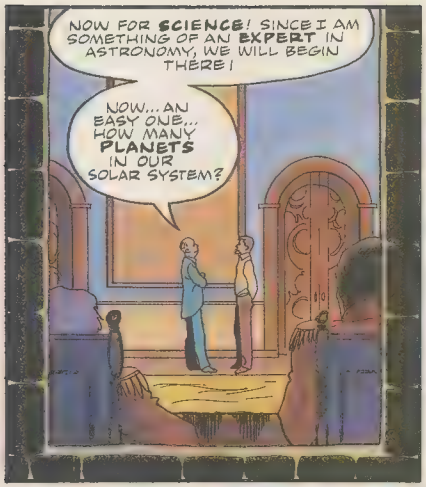
I'VE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO DO ONE THING FOR MYSELF SINCE I GOT HERE! I'VE BEEN PRODDED AND PUSHED AND BULLIED AND PATRONIZED, AND I'M SICK OF IT!


NO WONDER HE HAS NO SELF-CONFIDENCE!
I'M GOING TO FIX MY OWN BREAKFAST AND CHOOSE MY OWN BLASTED CLOTHES!

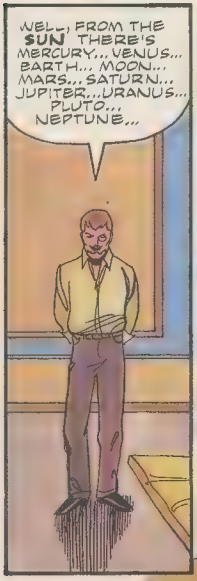
BUT...YOUR HIGHNESS... WAIT!
HELP ME, MASTER FRITT! MY WIG AND HAIR TINTS VANISHED DURING THE NIGHT!
MADAM, I ASSURE YOU, WE HAVE MORE TO WORRY ABOUT THIS MORNING THAN YOUR WIG!

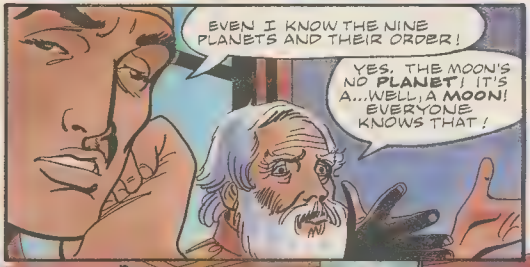

WELL, HOW DO I LOOK?
TERRIFIC!
BRAVO, MASTER RACE!
WERE YOU TRAINED IN THE ART OF DISGUISE?
I PICKED IT UP KICKING AROUND THE GLOBE...
...AND I HAVE A FRIEND NAMED JADE. SHE TAUGHT ME A LOT.
WISH ME LUCK!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW DUKE HUBERT PLANS TO MOVE YOU, IF THE CAGE IS SEALED...
UNLESS... HE PLANS TO DO IT WITH THE MACHINE THAT BROUGHT YOU!
THAT'S IT... IF THIS MACHINE CAN WHISK ME INTO THIS CAGE, IT CAN WHISK ME **OUT** AGAIN!
I WISH I WERE GOING WITH HIM. I THINK HE AND DOCTOR QUEST WILL NEED HELP AGAINST MY COUSIN.
BUT WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO WORK THE MACHINE. WE COULD MATERIALIZE YOU INSIDE A WALL!
THEN IT REALLY **IS** HOPELESS...
JONNY... DO YOU SEE THIS SMALL SWITCH? IT IS LABELED "**REVERSE**"...


AND AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE GREAT HALL, THE COLLECTED NOBILITY OF STARKGRAU GATHERS TO WATCH THE UNFOLDING DRAMA.
ANTHONY, MY SON... ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN THE EXAMINATION?
YES, FATHER
AS HEAD OF THE UNIVERSITY, I WILL ADMINISTER THIS PART OF THE TEST.
YOU WILL HAVE AN HOUR TO SOLVE THESE MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS. NATURALLY, YOU WON'T BE EXPECTED TO ANSWER ALL TEN, BUT...
THE ANSWERS ARE 324, 12, 89.07, 19.3 MILLIMETERS, 1/2 THE RADIUS, B EQUALS 7.43, 65, 11, 1000, AND 22 FEET PER SECOND PER SECOND.
WHY, UM... YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
MEAN-WHILE...
BUT WE DON'T KNOW IF IT'LL REALLY SEND YOU BACK TO THE HUNTING LODGE...
AND IF IT DOES, YOU'LL BE TEN MILES AWAY.
TRY IT! I MUST DO SOMETHING!
OKAY.
CLUK

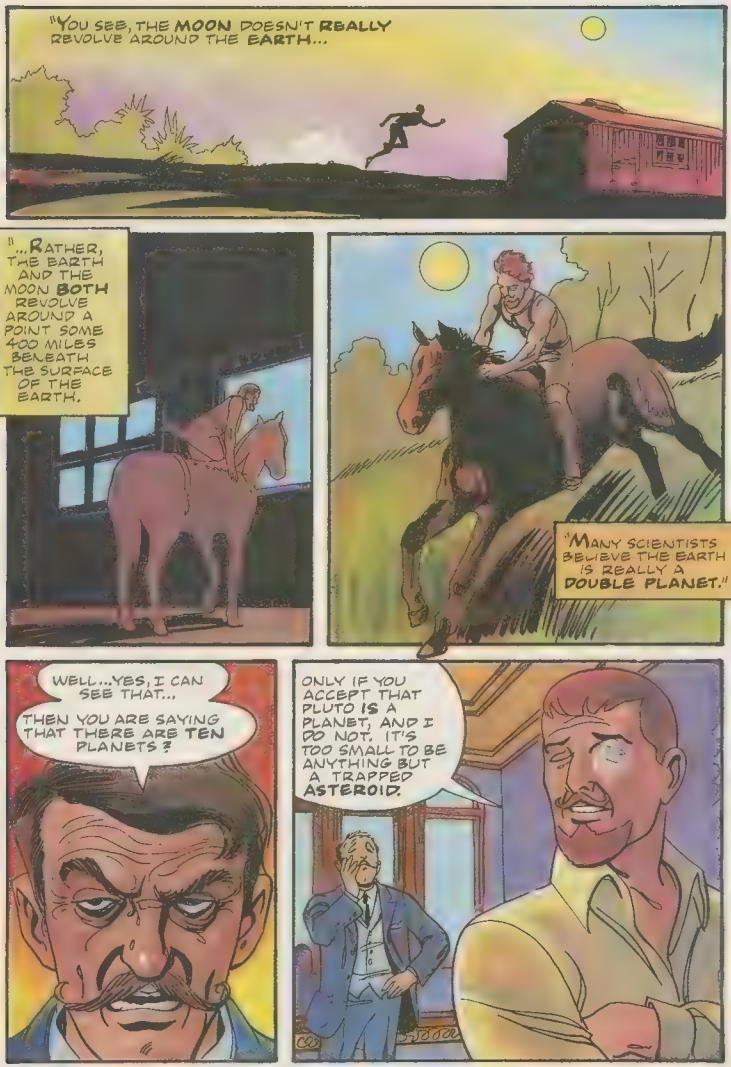

NOW FOR SCIENCE! SINCE I AM SOMETHING OF AN EXPERT IN ASTRONOMY, WE WILL BEGIN THERE!
NOW... AN EASY ONE... HOW MANY PLANETS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM?

EIGHT OR NINE... OR TEN... OR ELEVEN...
WHAT? NAME THEM!

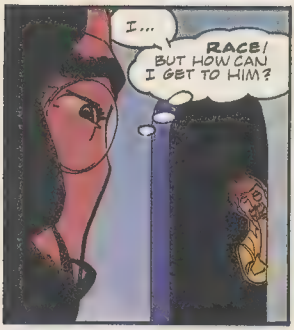

WELL, FROM THE SUN THERE'S MERCURY... VENUS... EARTH... MOON... MARS... SATURN... JUPITER... URANUS... PLUTO... NEPTUNE...

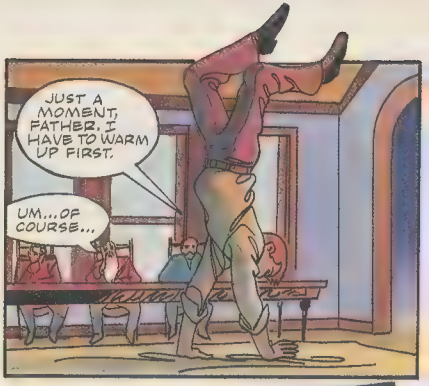

EVEN I KNOW THE NINE PLANETS AND THEIR ORDER!
YES, THE MOON'S NO PLANET! IT'S A... WELL, A MOON! EVERYONE KNOWS THAT!

"MAYBE SO, FATHER, BUT THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH THINGS THAT ARE HARD TO BELIEVE.


"YOU SEE, THE MOON DOESN'T REALLY REVOLVE AROUND THE EARTH...
"...RATHER, THE EARTH AND THE MOON BOTH REVOLVE AROUND A POINT SOME 400 MILES BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH.
"MANY SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THE EARTH IS REALLY A DOUBLE PLANET."
WELL...YES, I CAN SEE THAT...
THEN YOU ARE SAYING THAT THERE ARE TEN PLANETS?
ONLY IF YOU ACCEPT THAT PLUTO IS A PLANET, AND I DO NOT. IT'S TOO SMALL TO BE ANYTHING BUT A TRAPPED ASTEROID.

AND SINCE ITS SATELLITE, CHARON, IS SO LARGE, PLUTO, IF IT IS A PLANET, IS A DOUBLE PLANET.
OH, WELL, PLUTO HAS ALWAYS BEEN STEEPED IN MYSTERY. IT IS THE FURTHEST PLANET FROM THE SUN...
AH, BUT IT'S NOT. IN 1979 ITS ELLIPTICAL ORBIT BROUGHT IT INSIDE THE ORBIT OF NEPTUNE!
FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS NEPTUNE IS THE FURTHEST PLANET!
OH.
AMAZING! I HAD ALWAYS HOPED ANTHONY WOULD BE A LEARNED MAN, BUT THIS...HE KNOWS MORE THAN THE WISEST MAN IN THE KINGDOM.
IT'S ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF!
JUST WHAT I WAS THINKING, YOUR MAJESTY.
I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THE SECOND TEST TO BEGIN.
YES, YES! YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT!
SECOND TEST?
SINCE A KING MUST BE PHYSICALLY AS WELL AS INTELLECTUALLY FIT...
...THESE MEN WILL TEST YOUR FIGHTING SKILLS!


I...
RACE! BUT HOW CAN I GET TO HIM?


JUST A MOMENT, FATHER. I HAVE TO WARM UP FIRST.
UM...OF COURSE...

OOOOH. MY BACK! I HAVEN'T DONE THIS SINCE COLLEGE! THREE MORE FEET...TWO...

AHHHH.

I DON'T DARE SAY MUCH, BUT I CAN RISK ONE WORD.
READY!

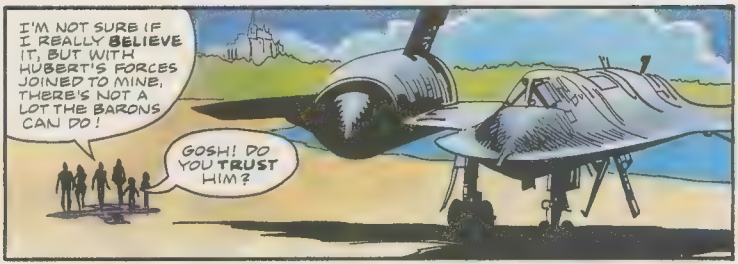
WHUP!

WHUT!
HHUK!
BONK!
WOK!
KRAK!
I... I YIELD!
NO! THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE! IT'S SOME KIND OF TRICK!
DUKE HUBERT!

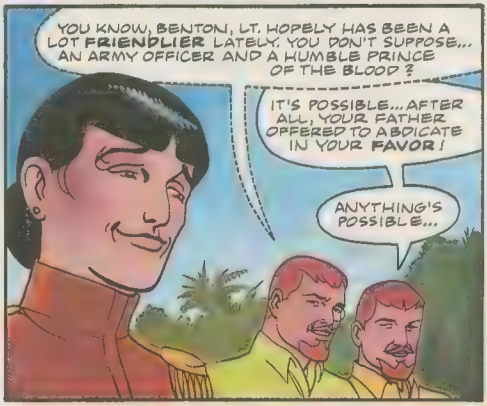
I MYSELF WILL CLEAR UP THIS LITTLE MATTER OF IDENTITY... WITH COLD STEEL!
HUBERT! WHY NOT FENCE SOMEONE WHO HAS A SWORD?
ANTHONY!
MY SON! WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
IT MEANS THIS FARCE IS NEARLY OVER!
DEFEND YOURSELF, WHOEVER YOU ARE!
AT YOUR PLEASURE, COUSIN!
ARE YOU REAL, COUSIN? HOW MANY MORE OF YOU ARE THERE? TEN? FIFTY? A THOUSAND?
ONLY ONE... AND AS REAL AS THE DAY WE BROKE THE DUCHESS' CHINA DOG AND BURIED IT IN THE GARDEN!

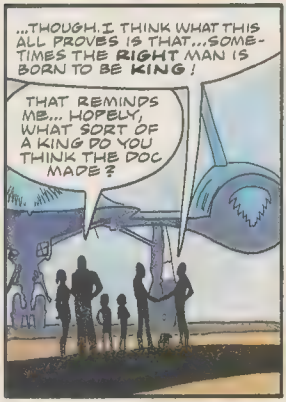
SO, YOU ARE THE REAL ANTHONY...SPRUNG FROM YOUR CAGE! MY POOR LITTLE CANARY!
YOU'LL SOON FEEL MY BEAK, DEAR COUSIN!
I ALWAYS KNEW IT WOULD COME TO THIS! STRENGTH AGAINST STRENGTH!
AND WHAT HAS YOUR STRENGTH WON YOU, HUBERT?
DO YOU WANT TO BE KING AS ZIN'S PUPPET? OR THE BARONS' PET?
AS USURPER, YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE TOO MANY DEBTS TO BE YOUR OWN MASTER!
IT'S TOO LATE! I MUST PLAY OUT THE GAME TO THE END!
FINISH IT, THEN!
I DON'T WANT YOUR DEATH, HUBERT. I WANT YOUR HELP...YOUR FRIENDSHIP.
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE!

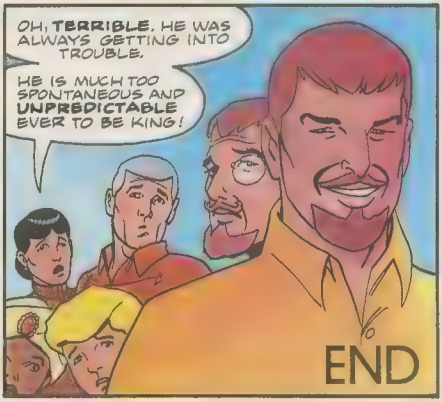
I NEED YOUR DECISIVENESS, YOUR WILL, IF I AM ABLE TO BE A DECENT KING.
AND IF NOT, WE'LL ALL GO VISIT THE CELLAR AND SEE WHAT CAN BE SEEN!
WELL?
WELL... INDEED.
WHAT IS HAPPENING?
WHO ARE THESE MEN DRESSED AS THE PRINCE?
IS THIS SOME PLOT?
THESE MEN ARE MINE, MY LORD. AND I MEANT NO HARM--ONLY TO SHOW YOUR MAJESTY THE ERROR OF YOUR WAYS BEFORE THEY DESTROYED YOUR KINGDOM.
DESTROYED? HOW?
NO ONE MAN COULD BE ALL YOU EXPECTED YOUR SON TO BE.
AND A GREAT KING, ABOVE ALL ELSE, REQUIRES NOT ENCYCLOPEDIC KNOWLEDGE OR STRENGTH, BUT MORAL COURAGE...
...THE ABILITY TO COMPROMISE WHEN NEEDED AND AN APPRECIATION OF HUMAN WEAKNESS.
AND, PERHAPS, THE ABILITY TO FORGIVE.


I'M NOT SURE IF I REALLY **BELIEVE** IT, BUT WITH HUBERT'S FORCES JOINED TO MINE, THERE'S NOT A LOT THE BARONS CAN DO!
GOSH! DO YOU **TRUST** HIM?

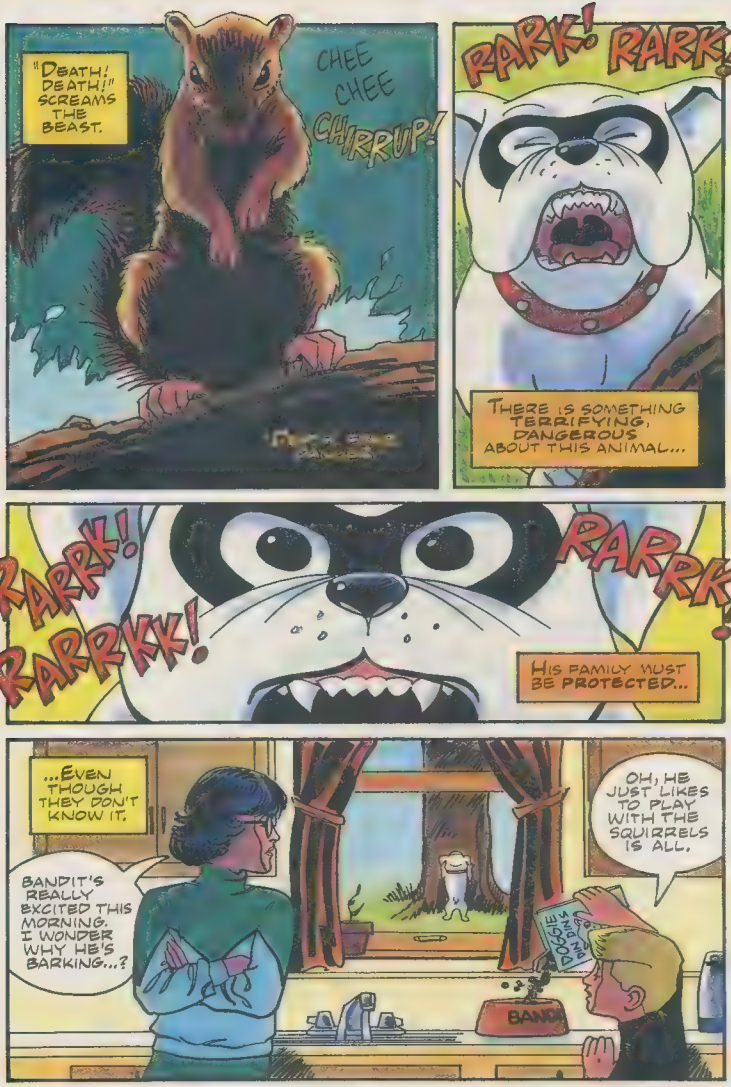
ODDLY ENOUGH, I DO! BUT I STILL MEAN TO **WATCH** HIM. AT LEAST MY LIFE WON'T BE BORING!


YOU KNOW, BENTON, LT. HOPELY HAS BEEN A LOT **FRIENDLIER** LATELY. YOU DON'T SUPPOSE... AN ARMY OFFICER AND A HUMBLE PRINCE OF THE BLOOD?
IT'S POSSIBLE... AFTER ALL, YOUR FATHER OFFERED TO ABDICATE IN YOUR **FAVOR**!
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE...

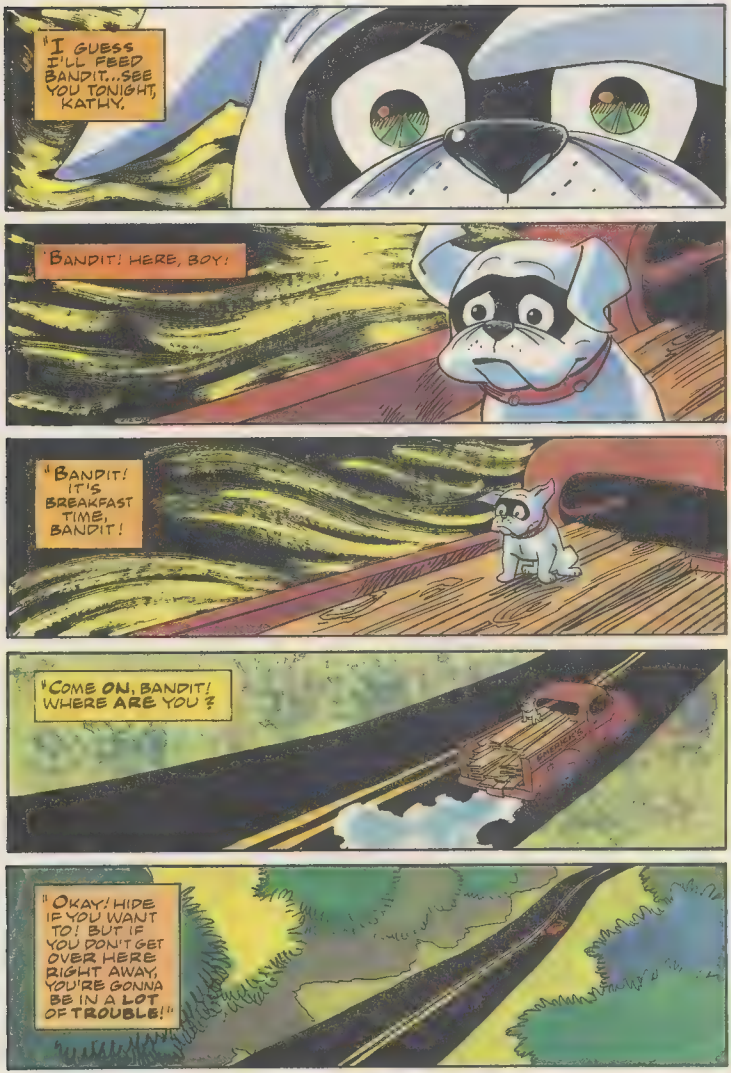

...THOUGH, I THINK WHAT THIS ALL PROVES IS THAT... SOMETIMES THE **RIGHT** MAN IS BORN TO BE **KING**!
THAT REMINDS ME... HOPELY, WHAT SORT OF A KING DO YOU THINK THE DOC MADE?


OH, **TERRIBLE**. HE WAS ALWAYS GETTING INTO TROUBLE.
HE IS MUCH TOO SPONTANEOUS AND **UNPREDICTABLE** EVER TO BE KING!
END

JONNY QUEST #25, [illegible] **COMICO The Comic Company,** [illegible]
[illegible] **JONNY QUEST** [illegible] the U.S.A.


"DEATH! DEATH!" SCREAMS THE BEAST.
CHEE CHEE CHIRRUP!
RARK! RARK!
THERE IS SOMETHING TERRIFYING, DANGEROUS ABOUT THIS ANIMAL...
RARRK! RARRKK!
RARRK!
HIS FAMILY MUST BE PROTECTED...
...EVEN THOUGH THEY DON'T KNOW IT.
BANDIT'S REALLY EXCITED THIS MORNING. I WONDER WHY HE'S BARKING...?
OH, HE JUST LIKES TO PLAY WITH THE SQUIRRELS IS ALL.
DOGGIE DIN DINS
BAND

ARE YOU GOING TO BE COMING OVER TONIGHT, KATHY?
TRRRRRRRR
UH-HUH. YOUR DAD FINALLY GOT A PRINT OF "AT LONG LAST LOVE," AND HE WANTS ME TO SEE IT.
GOOD. 'CAUSE I'M COOKING TONIGHT AN' I'M MAKING SPAGHETTI.
DO YOU LIKE SHARING THE KITCHEN DUTIES?
SURE, 'CAUSE WE GET TO EAT SOMETHING DIFFERENT EVERY DAY.
RACE LIKES TO MAKE HAMBURGERS OR CHILI..... AND HADJI'S MEALS ARE ALWAYS HOT, WITH CURRY AND PEPPERS...
SKLUK
...AND DAD MAKES SALADS AND FRUIT STUFF AND FUNNY BREAD...YOU KNOW, HEALTHY STUFF!
DAD SAYS EVERYBODY WHO'S PART OF THE FAMILY SHOULD KNOW HOW TO COOK AND BE ABLE TO CHOOSE A MEAL.
SPLOTCH
"I GUESS, PRETTY SOON, YOU'LL BE COOKING ONE DAY A WEEK TOO, HUH, KATHY?"
EMERICK'S LUMBERYARD
"YES, JONNY, I GUESS I WILL."
RRRRRRRRR
SKRUNT-KA
CREEECH

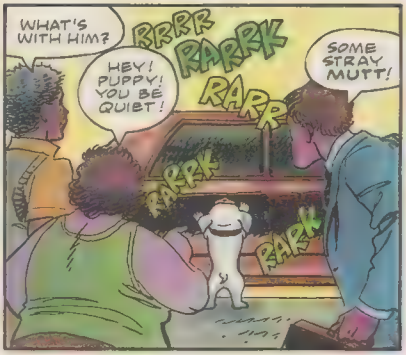

"I GUESS I'LL FEED BANDIT...SEE YOU TONIGHT, KATHY.
BANDIT! HERE, BOY!
"BANDIT! IT'S BREAKFAST TIME, BANDIT!
"COME ON, BANDIT! WHERE ARE YOU?
ENEMIES
"OKAY! HIDE IF YOU WANT TO! BUT IF YOU DON'T GET OVER HERE RIGHT AWAY, YOU'RE GONNA BE IN A LOT OF TROUBLE!"

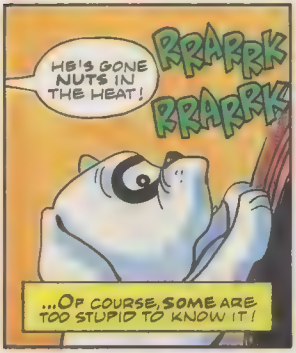
HI, DAD.
HI, SON. GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS, WILL YOU?
WOW! WHAT'S IN THIS THING, DAD?
PARTS OF ZIN'S MATTER TRANSFERENCE UNIT. PRINCE ANTHONY SENT IT FROM STARKGRAU FOR TESTING.
IF IT... uhh... WORKED RELIABLY... IT COULD BE THE MAKING OF THEIR ECONOMY.
FUNNY THING... I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A PRETTY BRIGHT GUY, BUT LATELY ALL I DO IS STUDY AND FINE-TUNE TECHNOLOGY OF ZIN'S!
ANTI-GRAV... TIME TRAVEL... NOW THIS! IT MAKES YOU WONDER...
DAD, ARE YOU GOING TO MARRY KATHY MARTIN?
WELL, THAT COULD BE A LONG ANSWER. SUPPOSE YOU HELP ME SORT THIS STUFF OUT AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT...
SAY, WHERE'S BANDIT?
I DON'T KNOW. HE DIDN'T COME FOR BREAKFAST.
"WELL, I'M SURE HE'LL TURN UP."
EMERICK'S LUMBERYARD

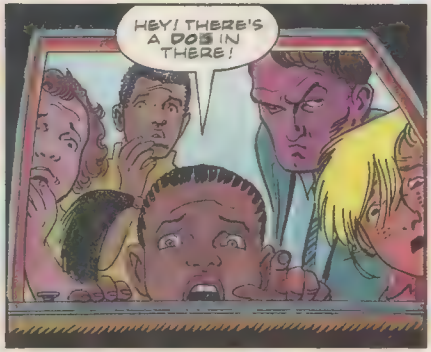
He walks for a long time, his home can't be too far away... though nothing looks familiar.
There are other dogs...
GRRRR
...But they smell of hunger and fear.
"I am lost and hungry..."
"I am hardbite, called 'Bill'... this is my place. Stay back!
GRRRR
RARRK! RRARRK!
"Stay back! No food! Stay back!"
RAK RAK RAK
"I am death-scream! This is my human! Stay away!"
Hush, top-knot!
He notices that all these dogs have two names: the name humans call you by, which has no meaning... and the name other dogs call you... it comes from some great feat you have performed.
He has only one name. He was taken from the kennel as a puppy and never mingled with other dogs.
He sometimes wonders what his pack name would have been.

IT IS VERY HOT. AND IT'S TIME FOR HIS AFTERNOON NAP. BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE HIS SOFT, WHITE RUG THAT SMELLS LIKE GARLIC OR THE SQUEAK-THING THE HUMANS THINK IS A MOUSE.
SO HE GOES ON.
HE IS VERY THIRSTY. HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW, BUT THIS IS ALL THE SQUIRREL'S FAULT.
KUFFF KUFFF
THE CALL COMES FROM FAR AWAY...
...OR INSIDE SOMEWHERE...
WHIINNN
KRRUFFF
KRUFF
...FILLED WITH FEAR AND PAIN...
WHHIIINN
WUF
THE CAR'S BODY GIVES OFF HEAT LIKE AN OVEN...
"HELP... TRAPPED..
"...CAN'T BREATHE...TOO HOT...TRAPPED.. FIND MY PACK LEADER... HE CAN DO ANYTHING..."
BUT WHERE SHOULD HE LOOK...?

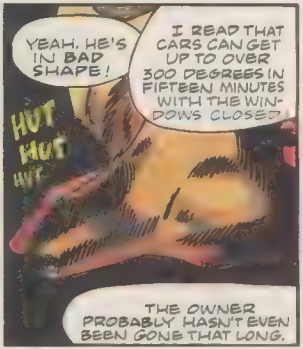
WHAT?! WHAT'S THAT?
RRRRARK RARR RRRR
STILL, ALL HUMANS ARE MAGIC TO SOME DEGREE...


WHAT'S WITH HIM?
BRRR RARRK RARR
HEY! PUPPY! YOU BE QUIET!
SOME STRAY MUTT!
RARRK
RARK


HE'S GONE NUTS IN THE HEAT!
RRARRK RRARRK
...OF COURSE, SOME ARE TOO STUPID TO KNOW IT!


HEY! THERE'S A DOG IN THERE!

POOR DOG!
WONDER WHO OWNS HIM...?
LOOKS PRETTY SICK!


YEAH. HE'S IN BAD SHAPE!
I READ THAT CARS CAN GET UP TO OVER 300 DEGREES IN FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH THE WINDOWS CLOSED!
HUT HUT HUT
THE OWNER PROBABLY HASN'T EVEN BEEN GONE THAT LONG.

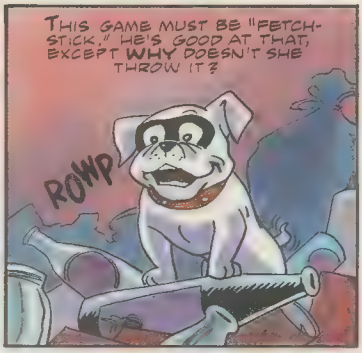
SUCH A PRETTY ANIMAL!
SOMEBODY SHOULD DO SOMETHING!
WELL, THE DOORS ARE LOCKED!
IT IS PRIVATE PROPERTY!
IT'S THE OWNER'S FAULT!
YBAH! IF HE LOSES HIS DOG, IT'S NO SKIN--
SCRASSH!
SOMEBODY HADDA DO SOMETHING.

GOOD DOGGIE. FEEL BETTER?
BET YOU FEEL BETTER, HUH, POOCHIE?
HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY DOG?
SALE ½ OFF
WHO SMASHED UP MY CAR?
SOMEBODY STOP HER! THAT OLD BAG LADY'S STEALING MY DOG!
SHE SMASHED UP MY CAR AND TRIED TO KILL MY DOG! SOMEBODY CALL A COP!

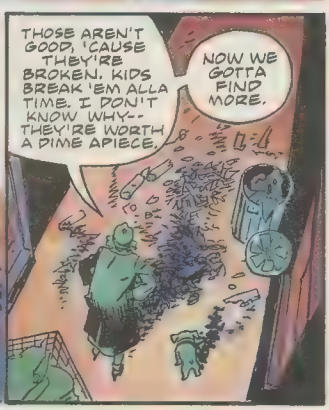
A FEW MINUTES LATER...
Huff-huff! I...THINK WE GOT AWAY...WHEW! NOT SUPPOSED T'RUN LIKE THAT... 'LESS I TAKE MY PILLS...
BUT I DON' GOT NO PILLS...SO I CAN'T TAKE ANY! THAT MAKES SENSE, DON' IT, BUTCH?
YOU'RE A NICE LITTLE POOCHIE. DID YOU GET LOSTED?
THAT MEANS "B," I THINK. MAYBE YOUR NAME REALLY IS "BUTCH"!
BANDIT
IF FOUND, PLEAS
RETURN TO
QUEST RESEARCH
9990
A REWARD
DO YOU WANNA STAY WITH ME, BUTCH? YOU'RE A GOOD POOCHIE!

SEE...THIS IS A GOOD ALLEY, 'CAUSE IT'S GOT LOTSA BOTTLES IN IT.

LIKE THIS ONE--SEE? YOU C'IN GET A DIME FIR THESE...
AND TEN DIMES MAKE A DOLLAR. THAT'S A LOTTA MONEY!
NOW YOU TRY!


THIS GAME MUST BE "FETCH-STICK." HE'S GOOD AT THAT, EXCEPT WHY DOESN'T SHE THROW IT?
ROWP

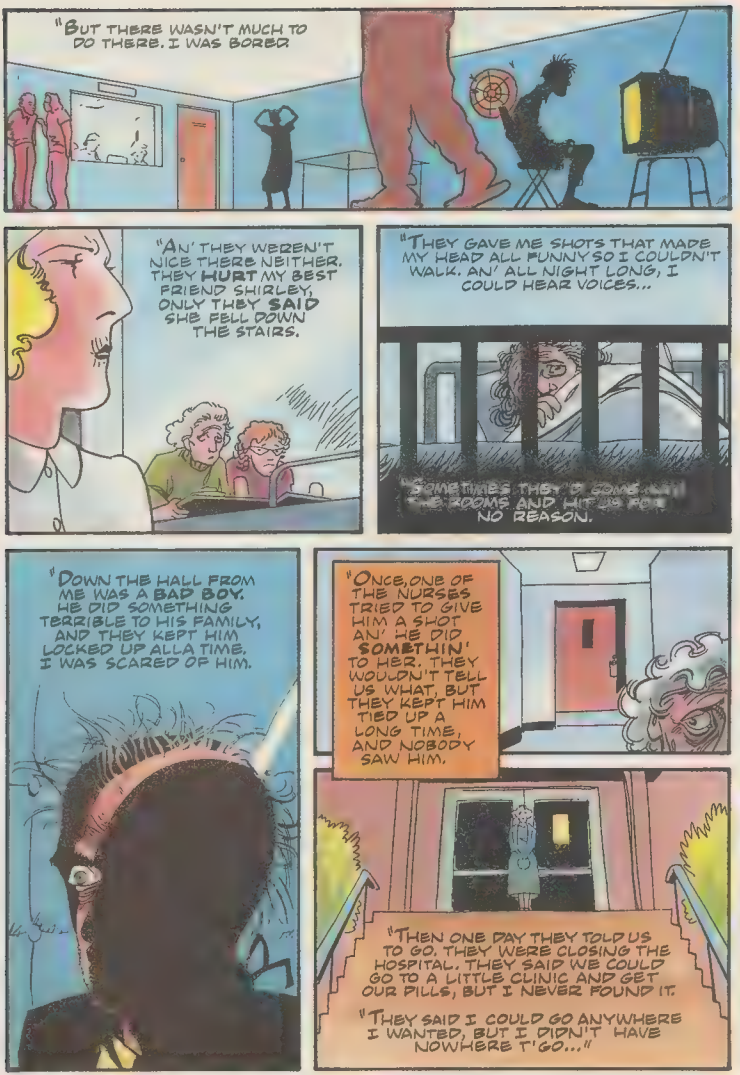
YOU FOUND ONE! YOU'RE A SMART POOCHIE!
HE LOVES GAMES.


THOSE AREN'T GOOD, 'CAUSE THEY'RE BROKEN. KIDS BREAK 'EM ALLA TIME. I DON'T KNOW WHY--THEY'RE WORTH A DIME APIECE.
NOW WE GOTTA FIND MORE.

ANYHOW, BUTCH, I BET WE CAN FIND SOMETHING FOR YOU. THEY THROW OUT FAT AND STUFF BEHIND THE GROCERY SOMETIMES...
'LO, BETH.
'LO, BENNY. I GOTTA DOG.
I SEE THAT. THAT'S NICE, BETH.
RED DIED LAS' NIGHT.
RED? OLD RED, THE CARD MAN?
UH-HUH.
HE'S A REAL SHARPER, THIS 'UN IS!
DID HE GET HIT BY A CAR OR SOMETHING?
NOPE.
YOU GOT ANY MONEY, BETH? I'M AWFUL DRY AND I NEED A DRINK REAL BAD.
UH, NO, BENNY. SORRY.
THA'S ALL RIGHT. I GOT ME A CONNECTION. OL' BENNY ALWAYS HAS A WAY T' WET HIS WHISTLE.
HE WAS CUT, BETH. HE WAS CUT BAD.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT QUEST RESEARCH...
BANDIT'S NOT BACK YET, SON?
NO... AND IT'S GETTING DARK.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY AND FIND HIM?
WELL, I KNOW YOU'RE BUSY AND STUFF... AND IT'D TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO DRIVE AROUND...
MAYBE WE WON'T HAVE TO. AFTER THE LAST TIME BANDIT GOT LOST, I PUT ONE OF THESE MINIATURE TRANSMITTERS IN ONE OF HIS COLLAR RIVETS.
THEN WE CAN FOLLOW HIM?
WITH LUCK, I CAN TRIANGULATE THE SIGNAL WITH ONE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITES, AND GET HIS DISTANCE AND DIRECTION.
Hmmm. A LOT OF STATIC. THERE MUST BE A STORM BREWING.
THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT! IT SAYS BANDIT'S ELEVEN DEGREES NORTH-NORTHWEST FROM HERE... 127 MILES AWAY!
GOSH! THAT MEANS WE'LL NEVER FIND HIM!

"JONNY, SUPPOSE YOU AND RACE TAKE THE VAN TOMORROW... I CAN PUT A MOBILE RECEIVER IN IT, AND THEN YOU'LL HAVE A BETTER SHOT AT FINDING HIM IN THE DAYLIGHT."
COME ON, BUTCH. TIME TO SLEEP.
THIS IS MY LUCKY ALLEY. IT'S CLOSE T'TH' POLICE STATION, SO NOTHIN' C'N HAPPEN.
NO
RRUMMBLE
SEE...I FOUND THIS BIG SHEET OF PLASTIC! ISN'T THAT LUCKY?
AND THIS WAY WE STAY DRY, JUST LIKE CAMPING OUT! GEORGE ALWAYS LIKED TO CAMP OUT, BUT WE NEVER GOT TO GO MUCH.
I WAS MARRIED TO GEORGE FOR A LONG TIME, UNTIL HE DIED. HE WAS A NICE MAN. HE NEVER MADE FUN OF ME, 'CAUSE I'M SLOW, PEOPLE SAY.
GEORGE USED TO SAY, "IT AIN'T HOW FAST YOU THINK, BUT THE WAY YOU THINK THAT MATTERS."
AFTER HE DIED, THEY SAID I DIDN'T HAVE NO MONEY, AN' I SHOULD GO AN' LIVE INNA HOSPITAL. SO I DID.

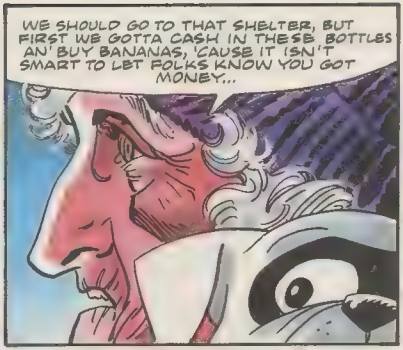

"BUT THERE WASN'T MUCH TO DO THERE. I WAS BORED.
"AN' THEY WEREN'T NICE THERE NEITHER. THEY HURT MY BEST FRIEND SHIRLEY, ONLY THEY SAID SHE FELL DOWN THE STAIRS.
"THEY GAVE ME SHOTS THAT MADE MY HEAD ALL FUNNY SO I COULDN'T WALK. AN' ALL NIGHT LONG, I COULD HEAR VOICES...
SOMETIMES THEY'D COME AN' THE ROOMS AND HIT US FOR NO REASON.
"DOWN THE HALL FROM ME WAS A BAD BOY. HE DID SOMETHING TERRIBLE TO HIS FAMILY, AND THEY KEPT HIM LOCKED UP ALLA TIME. I WAS SCARED OF HIM.
"ONCE, ONE OF THE NURSES TRIED TO GIVE HIM A SHOT AN' HE DID SOMETHIN' TO HER. THEY WOULDN'T TELL US WHAT, BUT THEY KEPT HIM TIED UP A LONG TIME, AND NOBODY SAW HIM.
"THEN ONE DAY THEY TOLD US TO GO. THEY WERE CLOSING THE HOSPITAL. THEY SAID WE COULD GO TO A LITTLE CLINIC AND GET OUR PILLS, BUT I NEVER FOUND IT.
"THEY SAID I COULD GO ANYWHERE I WANTED, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE NOWHERE T'GO..."

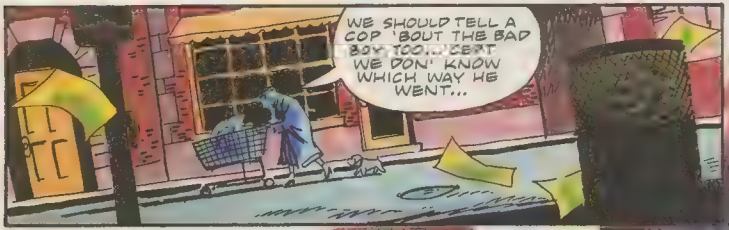
SO I CAME HERE. I THINK THEY LET THE BAD BOY GO, TOO. I WORRY ABOUT THAT SOMETIMES.
'COURSE, NOW YOU'RE HERE, I DON' GOTTA WORRY... 'CAUSE YOU'LL PROTECT ME.
HE FEELS GOOD. THERE IS NO WHITE BLANKET AND NO SQUEAK-THING, BUT SOMEWHERE THERE IS A SMELL OF GARLIC. AND SHE WILL PROTECT HIM.
NEXT MORNING...
ACCORDING TO THIS RECEIVER OF DAD'S... WE SHOULD BE GETTING CLOSE.
GREAT, KID I CALLED AHEAD AND THE LOCAL POLICE WANT TO TALK WITH US... THEY MAY HAVE A LEAD!
12222111212 2
OOPS! IT WAS READING "2." I GUESS IT'S GETTING INTERFERENCE FROM SOME PLACE.
AND FINALLY...
YOU SEE, MR. BANNON, I WAS CALLED TO A DISTURBANCE YESTERDAY, CAUSED BY A BAG LADY. THERE'S A LOT OF THEM AROUND HERE...
...IT STAYS WARM IN THE WINTER.
IT SEEMS LIKE FOLKS LIKE THAT WERE FURTHER ALONG BEFORE PEOPLE TRIED TO REFORM THINGS BY CLOSING THE INSTITUTIONS.
YEAH. REFORM.

I THINK THEY WERE JUST LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO CLOSE THOSE PLACES DOWN.
THERE WAS A LOT OF TALKING ABOUT REFORM, BUT IT WAS REALLY ABOUT SAVING MONEY.
THEY JUST DUMPED PEOPLE OUT IN THE STREET, AND LET US DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM.
AND ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE HAS BANDIT?
THAT'S HOW IT LOOKS. HER NAME'S BETH NORALDI. LIVES ON THE STREET NEAR DAVIS CIRCLE.
NICE OLD LADY, REALLY...NO HISTORY OF VIOLENCE...NOT THAT THAT'LL PROTECT HER AGAINST VIOLENCE...
SOMEONE'S KILLING STREET PEOPLE... THREE THIS WEEK. NO CLUES--WE DON'T HAVE THE MANPOWER TO PATROL THE STREETS.
THERE'S NOT A LOT OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PROTECTING BAG LADIES.
LET ME READ YOU A LETTER THE CHIEF GOT: "WHY DON'T YOU PULL YOUR MEN OFF THE STREETS AND LET THIS NUT CLEAN UP THIS TOWN? ONCE THE SCUM AND THE PARASITES ARE GONE, WE'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE LIKE HUMANS AGAIN."
BOY, SOMETIMES YOU WONDER ABOUT PEOPLE.

LOOKIT, BUTCH! THERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH OF BOTTLES!
AN' ALMOST ALL OF 'EM ARE RETURNS, TOO. WE CAN BUY ORANGES AN' BANANAS, 'CAUSE FRUIT IS GOOD FOR YOU.
'LO, BETH.
HI, MARIE. I GOTTA DOG, SEE?
UH-HUH.
THEY FOUND BROWNIE AND JAKE LAS' NIGHT. THEY WAS BOTH DEAD.
THEY WAS ALL CUT TO PIECES. COPS ARE TELLIN' EVERYBODY T'GO TO THE EAST SIDE SHELTER. THERE'S A SOUP KITCHEN THERE, AND NOBODY'LL GET CAUGHT ALONE.
ANYHOW, THAT'S WHERE I'M GOIN'. NOT GONNA GET ME TODAY, NOSSIR!

DID YOU SEE THAT, BUTCH?
I THINK THAT WAS THE BAD BOY. 'CEPT NOW HE'S GONE!


WE SHOULD GO TO THAT SHELTER, BUT FIRST WE GOTTA CASH IN THESE BOTTLES AN' BUY BANANAS, 'CAUSE IT ISN'T SMART TO LET FOLKS KNOW YOU GOT MONEY...


WE SHOULD TELL A COP 'BOUT THE BAD BOY TOO... 'CEPT WE DON' KNOW WHICH WAY HE WENT...

THERE'S A LITTLE GROCERY THIS WAY, AN' WE CAN CUT THROUGH THE ALLEY.

BENNY SHOWED ME THIS WAY TO GO. HE LIKES IT. HE SAYS NOBODY ELSE KNOWS THESE ALLEYS GOOD AS HIM.
I SURE LIKE BENNY.
BENNY...

EVERYONE MUST DIE
I WONDER IF THAT SAYS WHO KILLED HIM...?
SOMEBODY'S COMING...
...IT'S HIM...!
C'MON, BUTCH, C'MON! DON'T LET 'IM CATCH YOU! THERE'S A DOOR DOWN HERE.
LOCK'S BROKE...
...UP! STAIRS...
CAN'T LET HIM GET... MY STUFF.
BENNY SAYS DRUGGIES USE THIS BUILDING... THEY MUST'VE BROKE TH' LOCK...

LOCKED... MY CHEST HURTS... GOTTA KEEP GOIN'...
GOTTA HAVE... MY STUFF... IT'S ALL I GOT...
3
AH... OPEN... COME ON, BUTCH...
IT'S A ROOF! WE HAFTA HIDE.
BE REAL QUIET, BUTCH!

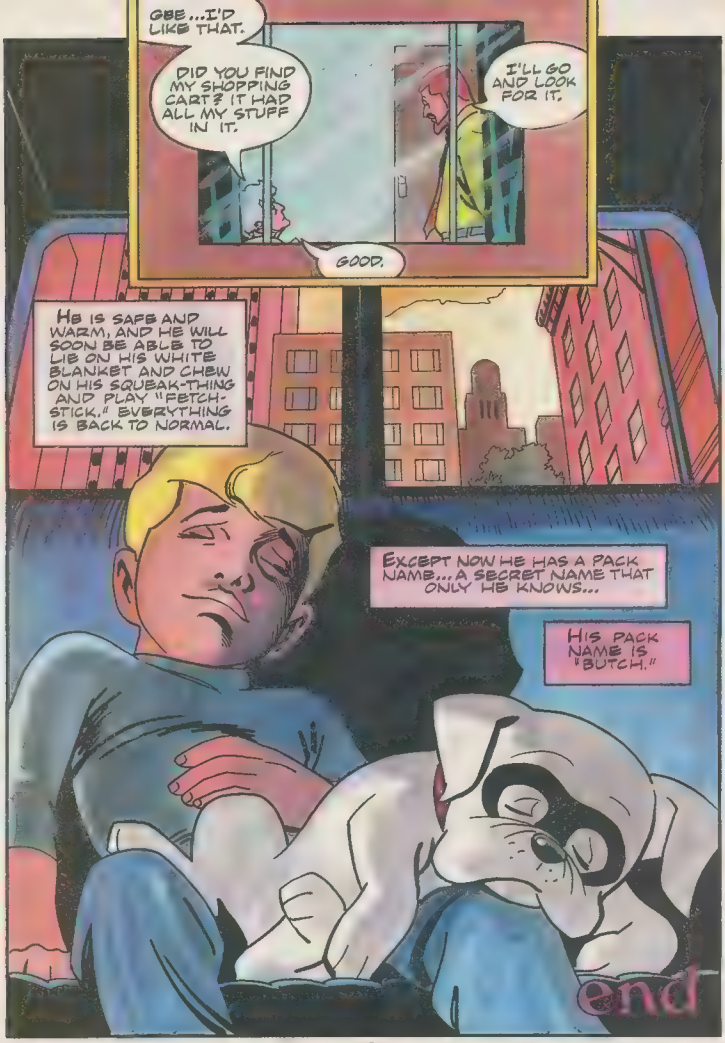
MEANWHILE...
I HOPE YOU FOLKS KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING...
SO DO I, OFFICER. HOW'S SHE TRACKING, JONNY?
PRETTY GOOD, RACE...NUTS! IT'S GONE OUT AGAIN!
IT MUST HAVE GOTTEN WET. BANDIT HAS TO BE AROUND HERE SOMEPLACE!
TAP TAP TAP
THERE...WE'RE ALMOST ON TOP OF HIM!
IT HAS TO BE THE BUILDING STRAIGHT AHEAD!
THE RAIN'S LETTING UP. AT LEAST NOW WE CAN SEE.
THIS IS THE LOCAL SHOOTING GALLERY FOR DOPERS. SEEMS DESERTED RIGHT NOW.
I WISH WE KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THERE...

YOU! I SEE YOU THERE! I KNOW YOUR FACE!
HE IS WET AND COLD...
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO FOLLOWS ME... WHO WRITES ME NOTES ON CANDY WRAPPERS... WHO TRIES TO KILL ME...
AND HE IS HUNGRY, TOO...
I DON'T DO THAT. THAT'S SOMEBODY ELSE...
NO! IT'S YOU! IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOU!
MY FOLKS TRIED TO LIE TO ME, WANTED TO TURN ME OVER TO YOU! BUT I FIXED 'EM!
THE HUMANS TALK AND TALK -- AND YET HE FEELS SOMETHING DISTURBING IN THE AIR...
..THE SMELL OF FEAR.
AND I FIXED EVERYBODY WHO WAS SENT T'KILL ME! ONE BY ONE!
AND NOW I'M GONNA FIX YOU!
NO! PLEASE! I AIN'T DONE...
AND THEN HE SEES THE ENEMY!

HEY...!
WUMP!
YAAAAAAAAAA

RACE, LOOK!
HE FELL FROM UP THERE...
STAY BACK HERE, KID.
BANDIT!
JONNY! NO!
SORRY, BANNON. YOU CAN'T GO UP THERE.
PAL, THAT KID JUST RAN UP THERE WITH GOD-KNOWS-WHAT WAITING FOR HIM. THE ONLY WAY YOU'RE KEEPING ME HERE IS TO SHOOT ME!
Hasp hasp hasp hasp!
BANDIT!

AND SO...
AH, YOU'RE AWAKE, MRS. NORALDI. YOU GAVE US QUITE A SCARE, BUT THE DOCTORS SAY YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE NOW.
MY NAME'S BETH... WHO...?
WHO ARE YOU?
I'M JONNY. BANDIT'S MY DOG. YOU TOOK GOOD CARE OF HIM.
YOUR DOG...?
I WAS SCARED I'D NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN!
YOUR DOG... I SEE.
WELL, I DON'T LIKE DOGS MUCH... SO IT'S GOOD HE HAS A LITTLE BOY WHO LOVES HIM.
HE WAS A... NICE POOCHIE.
I DON' THINK I CAN AFFORD T' BE HERE. I DON' HAVE MONEY FOR DOCTORS AN' HOSPITALS AN' STUFF.
ACTUALLY, THAT'S BEEN TAKEN CARE OF. BANDIT'S A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE... UM... QUEST FOUNDATION... AND THEY'VE TAKEN CARE OF YOUR BILL.
IN FACT, WHEN YOU'RE FEELING BETTER, THERE'S A FRIEND OF MINE WHO'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU. SHE'S A CASEWORKER, AND I THINK SHE CAN HELP YOU FIND SOMEWHERE TO STAY.

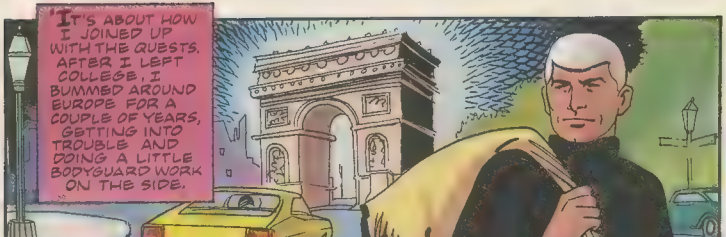

GEE...I'D LIKE THAT.
DID YOU FIND MY SHOPPING CART? IT HAD ALL MY STUFF IN IT.
I'LL GO AND LOOK FOR IT.
GOOD.
HE IS SAFE AND WARM, AND HE WILL SOON BE ABLE TO LIE ON HIS WHITE BLANKET AND CHEW ON HIS SQUEAK-THING AND PLAY "FETCH-STICK." EVERYTHING IS BACK TO NORMAL.
EXCEPT NOW HE HAS A PACK NAME... A SECRET NAME THAT ONLY HE KNOWS...
HIS PACK NAME IS "BUTCH."
end

JONNY QUEST #26, [illegible] **COMICO The Comic Company,** [illegible] Dekalb St., [illegible] PA [illegible] [illegible] 988 Hanna Barbera Productions [illegible] [illegible] and those of any existing or pre-existing [illegible] [illegible] **JONNY QUEST** [illegible]

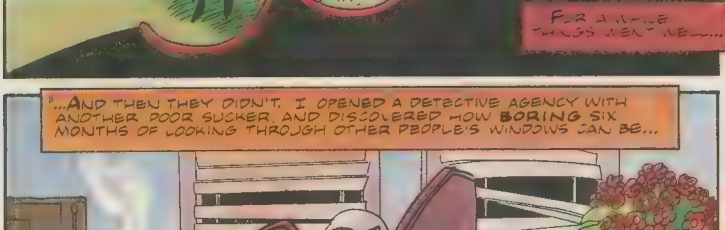
REPUTATION

WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS · STORY / MARC HEMPEL · PENCILS + LETTERS
MARK WHEATLEY · INKS + COLORS / KATHRYN MAYER · LETTERS + COLORS
DIANA SCHUTZ · GOSSIP

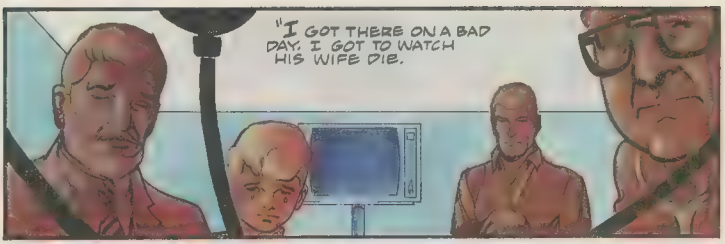
BUT THERE IS **NOTHING** YOU CAN DO! MY MEN WILL SURGE ACROSS THE EARTH ON THE GREAT TIDE OF MY **WILL**... MASSIVE, UNSTOP--!
yawwwnn
SORRY, BUT I'VE HEARD THAT SPEECH **THREE** TIMES ALREADY THIS YEAR. SEEMS LIKE, LATELY, EVERYBODY WITH FOUR GUYS AND A PROTON ACCELERATOR THINKS THEY CAN **RULE** THE **WORLD**.
NO OFFENSE.
LOOK, WE'VE GOT AN HOUR TO KILL, RIGHT? MIND IF I TELL YOU A STORY?


"IT'S ABOUT HOW I JOINED UP WITH THE QUESTS. AFTER I LEFT COLLEGE, I BUMMED AROUND EUROPE FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS, GETTING INTO TROUBLE AND DOING A LITTLE BODYGUARD WORK ON THE SIDE.

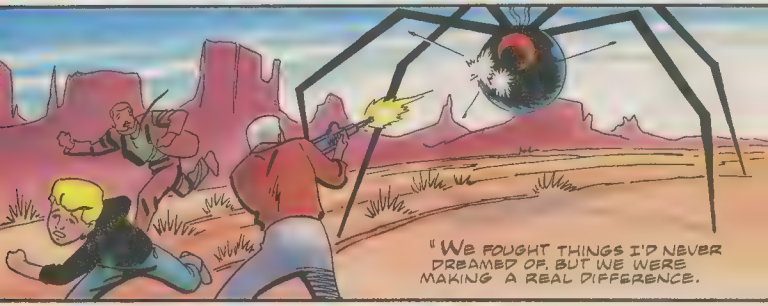
"I HAD BEEN APPROACHED IN COLLEGE TO JOIN A SMALL, TOP-SECRET GOVERNMENT AGENCY. I WAS APPROACHED AGAIN, AND I ACCEPTED.
FOR A WHILE THINGS WENT WE...

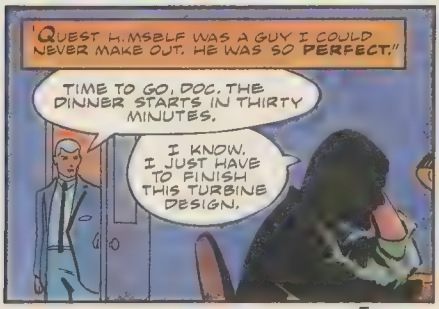

"...AND THEN THEY DIDN'T. I OPENED A DETECTIVE AGENCY WITH ANOTHER POOR SUCKER, AND DISCOVERED HOW **BORING** SIX MONTHS OF LOOKING THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE'S WINDOWS CAN BE...

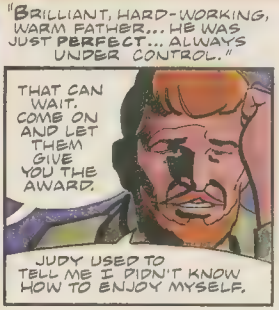
"SO I WENT BACK. BUT THINGS WERE DIFFERENT. WE WERE BEING HIRED OUT TO **THUGS**, TO FIGHT **OTHER** THUGS. I MADE A STINK... THEN I MADE A BIGGER STINK.
"PRETTY SOON, I WAS TOLD I WAS ON DETACHED SERVICE... I WAS TO BE A BODYGUARD FOR SOME SNOOTY SCIENTIST AND HIS KID.


"I GOT THERE ON A BAD DAY. I GOT TO WATCH HIS WIFE DIE.

"BENTON QUEST WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE SMARTEST GUYS ALIVE. WE WERE SENT AROUND THE WORLD TO STOP MADMEN AND THEIR CREATIONS... NO OFFENSE.

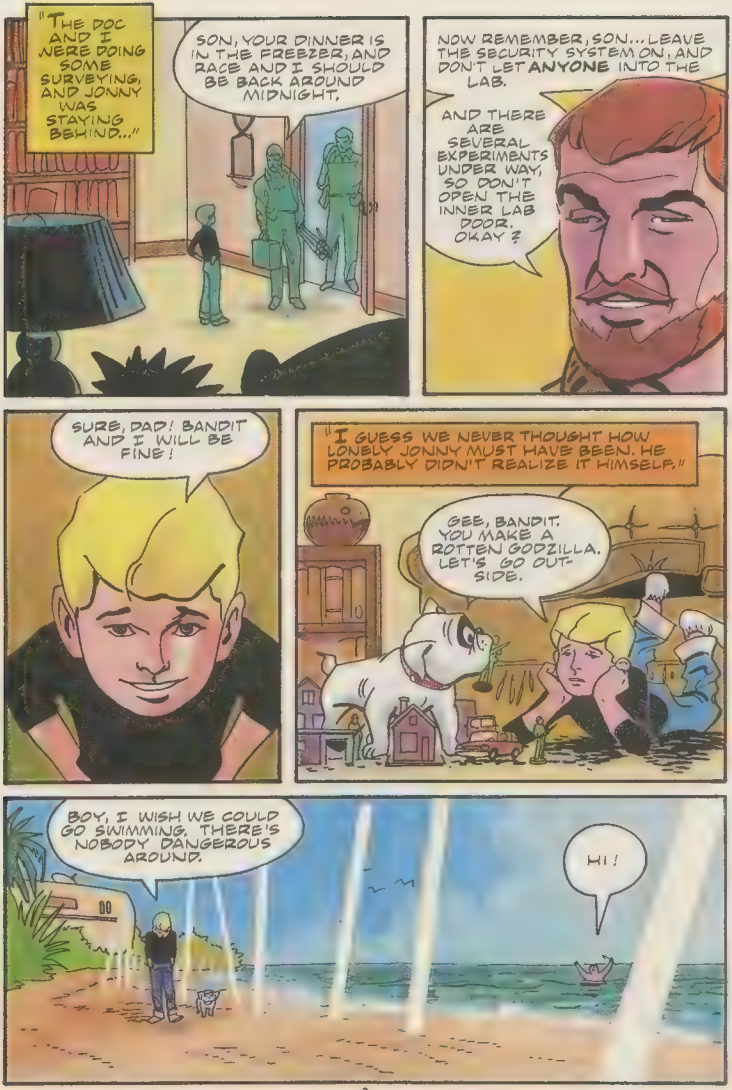

"WE FOUGHT THINGS I'D NEVER DREAMED OF, BUT WE WERE MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE.


"QUEST HIMSELF WAS A GUY I COULD NEVER MAKE OUT. HE WAS SO PERFECT."
TIME TO GO, DOC. THE DINNER STARTS IN THIRTY MINUTES.
I KNOW. I JUST HAVE TO FINISH THIS TURBINE DESIGN.


"BRILLIANT, HARD-WORKING, WARM FATHER... HE WAS JUST PERFECT... ALWAYS UNDER CONTROL."
THAT CAN WAIT. COME ON AND LET THEM GIVE YOU THE AWARD.
JUDY USED TO TELL ME I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO ENJOY MYSELF.

"AND THEN, ONE NIGHT..."
I REMEMBER WHEN SHE BOUGHT ME THIS TIE. IT CLASHED WITH MY SUIT AND I MADE FUN OF HER.
I SAID SHE HAD A LOT IN COMMON WITH HER PET RABBIT. THEY WERE BOTH COLORBLIND.
SHE LAUGHED...BUT I DON'T REMEMBER IF I EVER TOLD HER I REALLY LIKED IT...
...I DON'T REMEMBER...
BLAST! THAT'S NOT RIGHT. I NEVER COULD TIE THIS STUPID TIE.
STUPID TIE! STUPID TIE! STUPID TIE! STUPID TIE! STUPID TIE!
WHUP
WHUP
WHUP
WHUP
"YEAH, STUPID TIE."

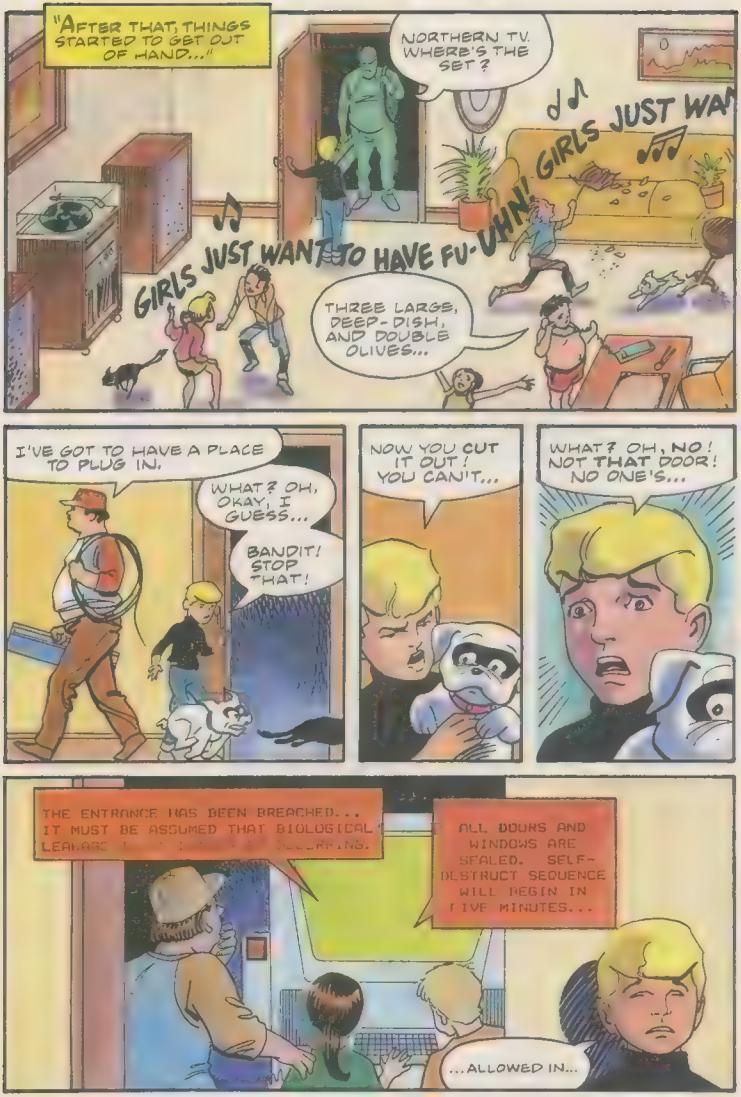
SO, THE GREAT BENTON QUEST HAS HIS WEAKNESS? GOOD. THAT IS WHERE I AM AHEAD OF HIM. I HAVE NONE!
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
THESE ARE MY SLAVES-- DRONES WHO WILL DO ANYTHING FOR ME... OBEY MY EVERY COMMAND!
THEY ARE MY ARMY ANTS! MY WILL IS THEIR WILL!
THEY WILL BE AN INVINCIBLE ARMY, THROUGH WHICH I SHALL TRANSFORM THE WORLD!
RIGHT. SAY, DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME JONNY THREW A PARTY?
NO? I DIDN'T THINK SO.


"THE DOC AND I WERE DOING SOME SURVEYING, AND JONNY WAS STAYING BEHIND..."
SON, YOUR DINNER IS IN THE FREEZER, AND RACE AND I SHOULD BE BACK AROUND MIDNIGHT.
NOW REMEMBER, SON... LEAVE THE SECURITY SYSTEM ON, AND DON'T LET ANYONE INTO THE LAB.
AND THERE ARE SEVERAL EXPERIMENTS UNDER WAY, SO DON'T OPEN THE INNER LAB DOOR. OKAY?
SURE, DAD! BANDIT AND I WILL BE FINE!
"I GUESS WE NEVER THOUGHT HOW LONELY JONNY MUST HAVE BEEN. HE PROBABLY DIDN'T REALIZE IT HIMSELF."
GEE, BANDIT. YOU MAKE A ROTTEN GODZILLA. LET'S GO OUTSIDE.
BOY, I WISH WE COULD GO SWIMMING. THERE'S NOBODY DANGEROUS AROUND.
HI!

MY NAME'S STEVIE, AN' MY FOLKS ARE ON VACATION. YOU WANNA SCUBA WITH ME?
MY NAME'S JONNY. I CAN'T. I GOTTA GUARD THE HOUSE.
WELL, IF YOU CAN'T COME OUT, I'LL COME IN...
OOPS! THAT TINGLES!
IT'S AN ELECTROMAGNETIC SECURITY FENCE MY DAD RIGGED UP. YOU CAN'T COME IN.
GEE, MY FOLKS ARE GONE ALL THE TIME, AND I'VE GOT NOBODY TO PLAY WITH.
CAN'T I COME F'R A MINUTE? JUST TO GET A DRINK OF WATER?
I CAN'T...
WELLLL... I GUESS IT'LL BE OKAY FOR A LITTLE WHILE. YOU'RE NOT A FOREIGN SPY OR ANYTHING...
OH, BOY! I WAS SICK OF SNORKELING! THIS'LL BE FUN!

THERE. I CAN TURN IT OFF AGAIN, WHEN YOU GO.
THIS IS A GREAT PLACE! WHERE'S THE KITCHEN?
IT'S IN HERE, BUT THERE'S NOTHING TO EAT EXCEPT MY SUPPER AND...
STEVIE? WHERE ARE YOU?
HEY, LOOK AT THIS.
IT'S A LAB, JUST LIKE ON TELEVISION.
UM... WE'RE NOT ALLOWED IN HERE.
YOU WANT TO WATCH MOVIES ON TELEVISION, STEVIE? I'VE GOT GHOSTBUSTERS!

NAH. I'VE SEEN THAT ONE! YOU GOT PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, WITH NO SOUND? I LIKE THAT ONE.
WHY AIN'T THERE NO PICTURE?
I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS THE TV'S BROKEN.
NOTHING WORKS! AND I WANTED TO SEE MAGNUM TONIGHT!
YOU SHOULD CALL A REPAIRMAN! IT'D BE DONE BY THE TIME YOUR DAD GETS HOME.
I CAN'T DO THAT! I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO LET PEOPLE IN HERE!
YOU WANNA SHOW YOUR DAD YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF THINGS BY YOURSELF, DON'T YOU? HEY, YOU DIDN'T SAY YOU HAD LASAGNA IN HERE!
THAT'S MY DINNER!
IT'S GOOD.
CLIK
WE SHOULD LET MY BROTHERS IN, MAYBE THEY CAN FIX THE TV.
BUT...
YOUR BROTHERS?
AND SISTERS AND A COUPLE FRIENDS.
HEY, I KNOW! LET'S HAVE A PARTY!


"AFTER THAT, THINGS STARTED TO GET OUT OF HAND..."
NORTHERN TV. WHERE'S THE SET?
GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FU-UHN!
GIRLS JUST WA
THREE LARGE, DEEP-DISH, AND DOUBLE OLIVES...
I'VE GOT TO HAVE A PLACE TO PLUG IN.
WHAT? OH, OKAY, I GUESS...
BANDIT! STOP THAT!
NOW YOU CUT IT OUT! YOU CAN'T...
WHAT? OH, NO! NOT THAT DOOR! NO ONE'S...
THE ENTRANCE HAS BEEN BREACHED... IT MUST BE ASSUMED THAT BIOLOGICAL
ALL DOORS AND WINDOWS ARE SEALED. SELF-DESTRUCT SEQUENCE WILL BEGIN IN FIVE MINUTES...
...ALLOWED IN...

MINIMIZE CONTAMINATION...
Northern TV
HEY, WHO LOCKED ALL THE DOORS? Oh-oh...
LET ME DO THIS! I ALWAYS SOLVE THE PUZZLES ON OUR COMPUTER AT HOME!
STEVIE! DON'T...!
Northern TV
DEACTIVATED.
I TOLD YOU!
YOU DISTRACTED ME!
I'LL BET I CAN DISCONNECT THE POWER SOURCE ON THIS SUCKER. WE'LL JUST CLOSE THE WHOLE THING DOWN!
THE POWER SOURCE HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED. BACK-UP BATTERIES ACTIVATED. DETONATION WILL COMMENCE IN FIVE SECONDS... FOUR...

THREE...
TWO...
BEEEP
OFF
DAD!
WELL, AT LEAST WE KNOW IT WORKS.
GOSH...I GUESS I SHOULD GET HOME NOW, JONNY. MY FOLKS'LL BE WORRIED. NICE TO MEET YOU, SIR...

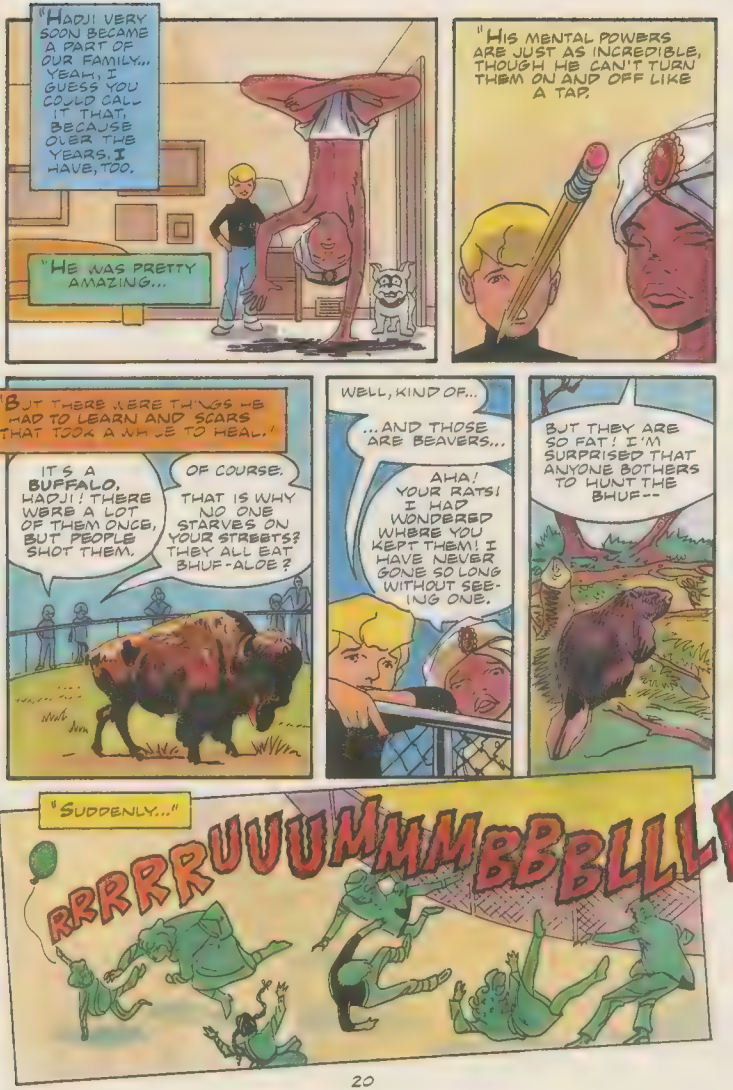
"WELL, LATER ON THAT EVENING...
RACE? CAN I TALK TO YOU A MINUTE?
I THINK DAD'S REALLY GOING TO KILL ME THIS TIME. HE HASN'T SAID ANYTHING ALL DAY... I THINK HE'S GONNA DO SOMETHING TERRIBLE...!
LIFE'S TOUGH, KID. IF THERE WASN'T A SENSOR IN THE BOAT THAT ALERTED US TO THE FENCE BEING DISTURBED...
YEAH... I WOULD HAVE BLOWN US ALL UP.
MAYBE HE'LL TAKE AWAY TV FOR A MONTH. THERE'S NOT MUCH GOOD ON ANYWAY...
ACTUALLY, I WAS THINKING OF TAKING AWAY TV, RADIO, VCR, MOVIES, AND TAPES... FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
THAT... THAT SOUNDS FAIR.
THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I WON'T.
YOU KNOW, SON, WHEN I WAS TEN, MY FOLKS TOLD ME TO WATCH THE HOUSE FOR THREE HOURS. I WASN'T TO GO OUT OR DO ANY EXPERIMENTS.
I WON'T GO INTO DETAIL, BUT WHEN THEY GOT HOME, THE GRASS WAS A BRIGHT BLUE, THE PORCH HAD MELTED, AND THERE WAS A PINK CLOUD THE SIZE OF A FOOTBALL FIELD OVER OUR HOUSE.
OH.
SO DOES THAT MEAN I'M IN TROUBLE OR NOT IN TROUBLE?

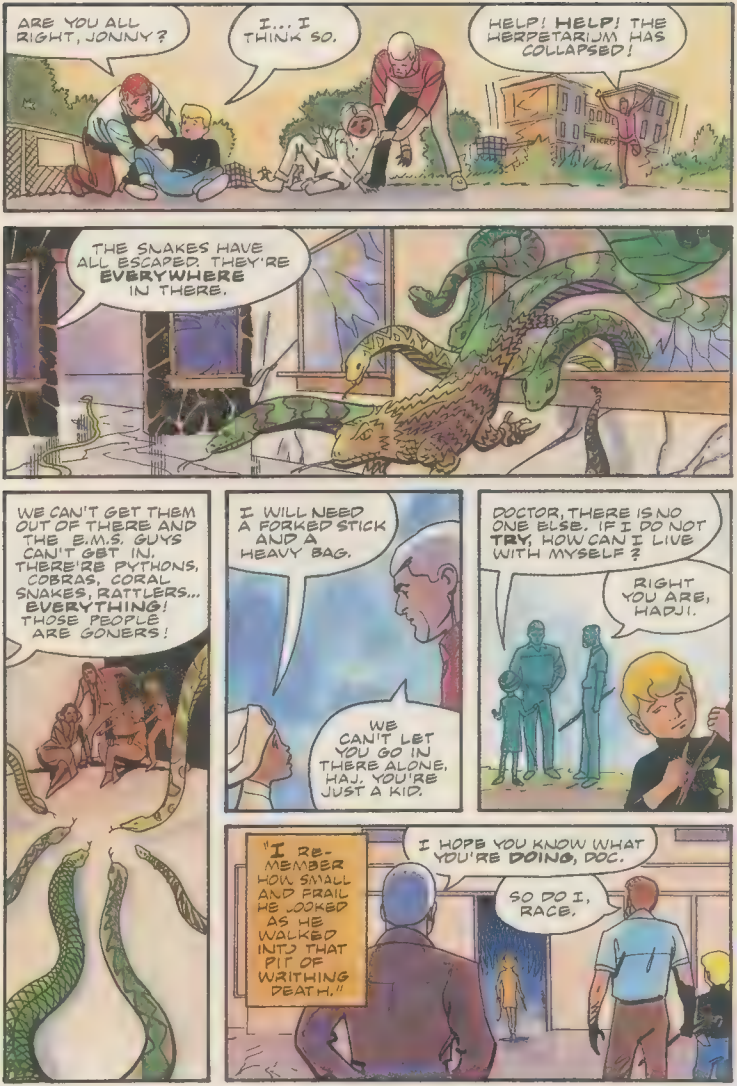
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, SON. I WANT YOU TO LEARN TO USE YOUR OWN JUDGMENT AND TO DO THINGS BECAUSE THEY'RE **RIGHT**, NOT BECAUSE I'M GOING TO PUNISH YOU.
THIS LIFE OF OURS IS A RISKY ONE, AND YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO BREAK A RULE--EVEN A RULE OF MINE. I'M NOT ALWAYS RIGHT.
BUT YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR BREAKING THAT RULE.
SO...I WANT YOU TO SET **YOUR OWN** PUNISHMENT. THAT'S AS FAIR AS I CAN BE.
I THINK I LIKED IT BETTER WHEN HE WAS GOING TO KILL ME.
PIZZA

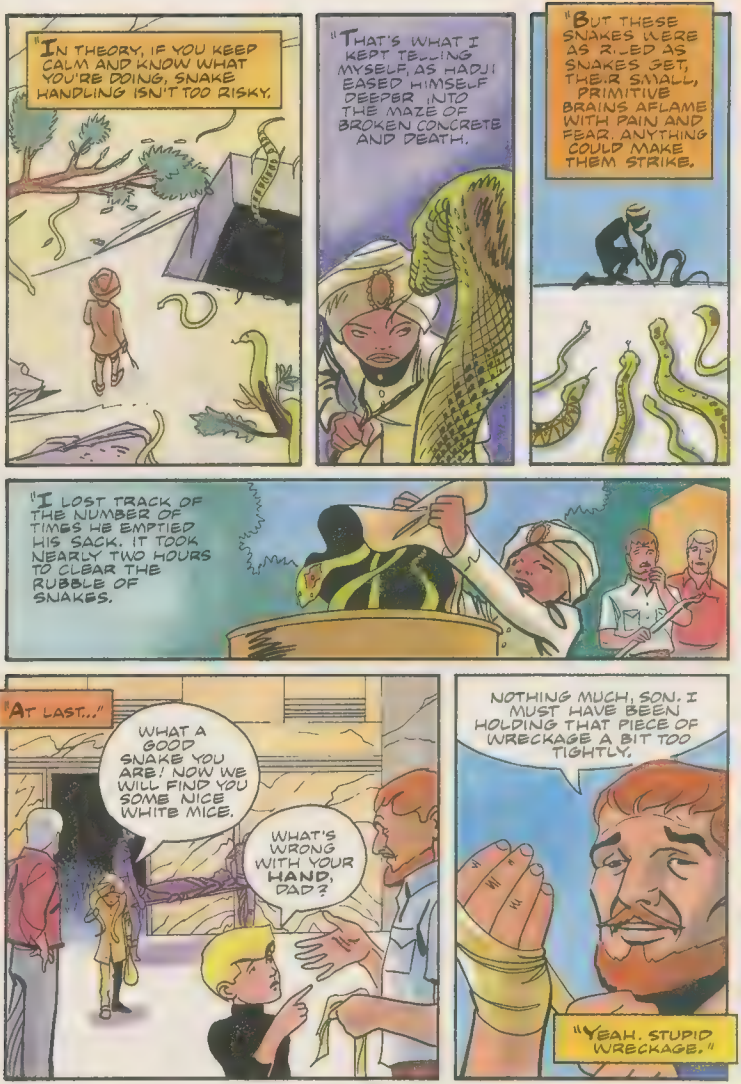
ENOUGH! SUCH PETTY FAMILY SQUABBLES SHALL BE BESIDE THE PO'INT WHEN I HAVE RAISED MY THRONE OF SKULLS AND CLEANSED THE EARTH WITH BLOOD AND FIRE!
A THOUSAND TRANSMITTERS ARE BEING SET UP AROUND THE WORLD--A SPIDER'S WEB OF SOUND TO CONTROL MY LEGIONS OF SLAVES!
ONE BY ONE, EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD ON EARTH WILL FALL UNDER MY SWAY... BE PERFECTED, BE IMMORTAL!
THERE WILL BE NO MORE TEARS THEN! LIFE WILL BE MINE!
UH-HUH. SO, ANYWAY, JONNY WAS PRETTY LONELY. I THINK THAT'S WHY THE DOC TOOK TO HADJI RIGHT AWAY...

"We were in India, after some lunatic who thought he could rule the world--no offense--in the worst part of that gangrenous hole called Calcutta...
"...When, suddenly, we had an ally.
THUNK!
"He had no one there, but the government wasn't happy about letting foreign nationals take one of their citizens...
"I was never prouder of the Doc.
"He never got mad...never threw his weight around... just talked and talked, filled out all their forms, and talked some more.
"In the end, they were convinced they had talked HIM into taking Haj. Doc didn't care...
"...He's a man who values RESULTS."

MY RESULTS WILL BE MORE IMPRESSIVE, IMAGINE, A HORDE OF THESE MINDLESS ONES, OBEDIENT ONLY TO ME, IMAGINE THE HAVOC...!
OBEDIENT, EH?
SIT DOWN!
STAND UP!
SAY, YOU'RE RIGHT! THIS IS FUN!

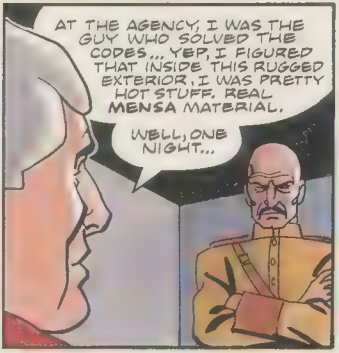

"HAOJI VERY SOON BECAME A PART OF OUR FAMILY... YEAH, I GUESS YOU COULD CALL IT THAT, BECAUSE OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE, TOO.
"HE WAS PRETTY AMAZING...
"HIS MENTAL POWERS ARE JUST AS INCREDIBLE, THOUGH HE CAN'T TURN THEM ON AND OFF LIKE A TAP.
"BUT THERE WERE THINGS HE HAD TO LEARN AND SCARS THAT TOOK A WHILE TO HEAL.'
IT'S A BUFFALO, HAOJI! THERE WERE A LOT OF THEM ONCE, BUT PEOPLE SHOT THEM.
OF COURSE. THAT IS WHY NO ONE STARVES ON YOUR STREETS? THEY ALL EAT BHUF-ALOE?
WELL, KIND OF...
...AND THOSE ARE BEAVERS...
AHA! YOUR RATS! I HAD WONDERED WHERE YOU KEPT THEM! I HAVE NEVER GONE SO LONG WITHOUT SEEING ONE.
BUT THEY ARE SO FAT! I'M SURPRISED THAT ANYONE BOTHERS TO HUNT THE BHUF--
"SUDDENLY..."
RRRRRUUUMMMBBBLLL!


ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, JONNY?
I... I THINK SO.
HELP! HELP! THE HERPETARIUM HAS COLLAPSED!
THE SNAKES HAVE ALL ESCAPED. THEY'RE EVERYWHERE IN THERE.
WE CAN'T GET THEM OUT OF THERE AND THE E.M.S. GUYS CAN'T GET IN. THERE'RE PYTHONS, COBRAS, CORAL SNAKES, RATTLERS... EVERYTHING! THOSE PEOPLE ARE GONERS!
I WILL NEED A FORKED STICK AND A HEAVY BAG.
WE CAN'T LET YOU GO IN THERE ALONE, HAJ. YOU'RE JUST A KID.
DOCTOR, THERE IS NO ONE ELSE. IF I DO NOT TRY, HOW CAN I LIVE WITH MYSELF?
RIGHT YOU ARE, HADJI.
"I REMEMBER HOW SMALL AND FRAIL HE LOOKED AS HE WALKED INTO THAT PIT OF WRITHING DEATH."
I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, DOC.
SO DO I, RACE.

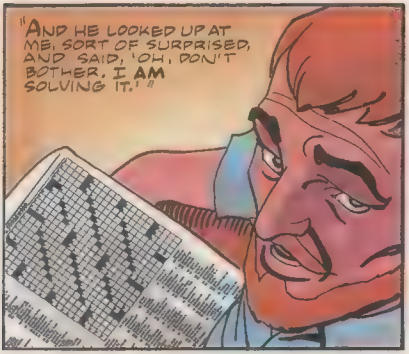

"In theory, if you keep calm and know what you're doing, snake handling isn't too risky.
"That's what I kept telling myself, as Hadji eased himself deeper into the maze of broken concrete and death.
"But these snakes were as riled as snakes get, their small, primitive brains aflame with pain and fear. Anything could make them strike.
"I lost track of the number of times he emptied his sack. It took nearly two hours to clear the rubble of snakes.
"At last..."
What a good snake you are! Now we will find you some nice white mice.
What's wrong with your hand, Dad?
Nothing much, son. I must have been holding that piece of wreckage a bit too tightly.
"Yeah. Stupid wreckage."

FORTUNATELY, I AM A GENIUS. I AM MUCH TOO INTELLIGENT EVER TO BE CAUGHT UP IN SUCH SENTIMENTALISM!
RIGHT. YOU KNOW, I USED TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A PRETTY SMART GUY, TOO.

IN SCHOOL, I WAS PRETTY GOOD AT SOLVING PUZZLES... ANAGRAMS, REBUSES... ANYTHING.
ONCE I MEMORIZED ALL THE KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND.


AT THE AGENCY, I WAS THE GUY WHO SOLVED THE CODES... YEP, I FIGURED THAT INSIDE THIS RUGGED EXTERIOR, I WAS PRETTY HOT STUFF. REAL MENSA MATERIAL.
WELL, ONE NIGHT...

"... JUST AFTER JOINING THE QUBSTS, I CAME DOWNSTAIRS AND THE DOC WAS SITTING THERE, JUST LOOKING AT THE NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE. SO I SAID, 'DO YOU WANT ME TO GET A PENCIL, SO YOU CAN SOLVE THAT?'

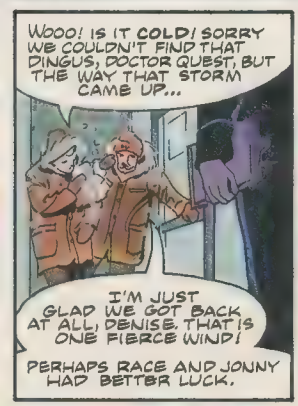

"AND HE LOOKED UP AT ME, SORT OF SURPRISED, AND SAID, 'OH, DON'T BOTHER. I AM SOLVING IT.'"

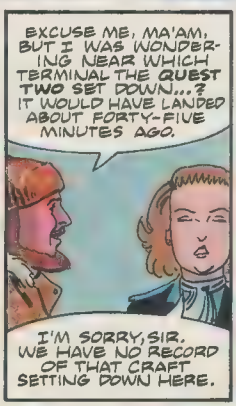
KIND OF BEATS THE HECK OUT OF THE KINGS OF ENGLAND, HUH?

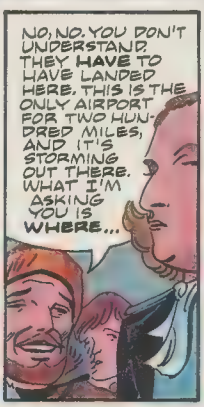
ENOUGH REMINISCENCE! I AM WEARY TO DEATH OF YOUR TALK, AND IT IS TIME I STARTED TO PURIFY THE EARTH OF FOOLS!
NOTHING PERSONAL!
WHAT A GROUCH!
MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY, RACE!
PUT DOWN THAT GUN!
QUEST!
DOC!
I FREED MY BOYS, BUT MY PATIENCE IS ABOUT EXHAUSTED, MR. DENTRESS, SO IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE REPLACED BY A CUBIC METER OF MOLTEN CONCRETE...
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! JUST DON'T SHOOT!

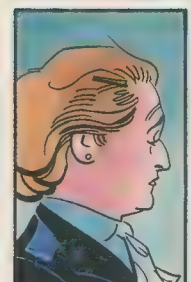
AND SO...
I THINK WE'VE GOT ALL OF THE "MINDLESS SLAVES" ROUNDED UP, DOC.
GOOD. IT'S FORTUNATE THAT THE EFFECTS OF MAGYAR'S ELECTRONIC BRAIN CONDITIONING CAN BE REVERSED!
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
OOOHHH...MY HEAD IS KILLING ME! ALL I DID WAS ANSWER AN AD FOR "AMBITIOUS MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PEOPLE EAGER TO GET AHEAD," AND I WOKE UP HERE!
I'M GOING BACK TO CORPORATE LAW!
HOW DID YOU GET THE CELL DOOR OPEN, DOC?
WELL, ACTUALLY, THE GUARDS FORGOT TO LOCK IT!
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH "MINDLESS SLAVES"... THEY'RE, WELL, MINDLESS!

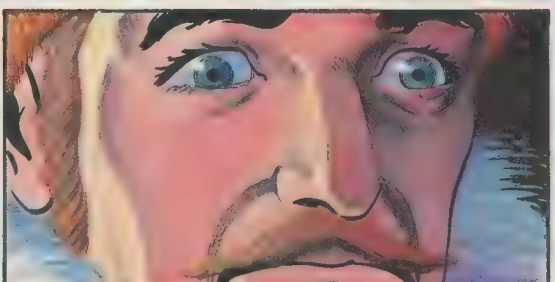
SO THEN YOU RELEASED THE BOYS, AND SNUCK INTO THE LAB AND CREATED THAT LASER BLAST? THAT'S TERRIFIC!
WELL, YES, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN, BUT I COULDN'T FIND THE LAB, SO I UNSCREWED THE NOZZLE FROM THE HOSE OUTSIDE.
WORKED PRETTY WELL, DON'T YOU THINK?
NOTHING LIKE HAVING A REPUTATION!
THE END











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with thanks to
B.A. RICHARDSON

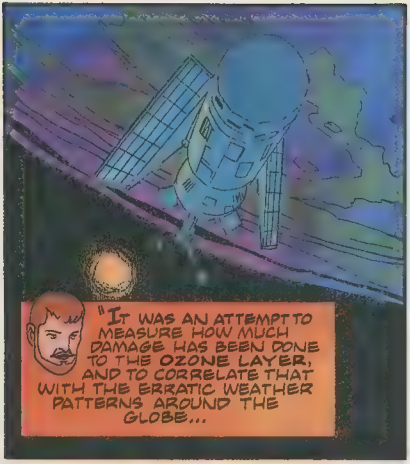
THE RADIO'S OUT, AND RACE SAYS WE'RE TOO BANGED UP TO GET AIRBORNE AGAIN. I DON'T THINK DAD CAN FIND US WHEN IT'S SNOWING THIS HARD.
SLEEP UP HERE, BANDIT. IT'LL KEEP US WARMER, AND YOU WON'T BE AS SCARED.
I JUST HOPE RACE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. I THINK HE GOT HURT IN THE CRASH.
DON'T WORRY, BOY. WHEN WE WAKE UP IN THE MORNING, THE STORM WILL BE OVER, RACE WILL BE ALL BETTER, AND DAD WILL COME AND RESCUE US.
EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT.

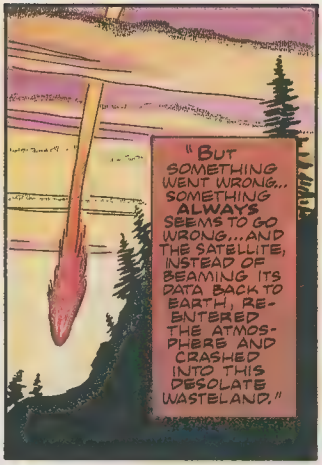
RACE? I THINK IT'S MORNING. IT'S STILL SNOWING. MAYBE YOU SHOULD GET UP AND DO SOMETHING.
WHA--? OH, HI, KID. SNOW? YOU GO'N' SHOVEL IT... I'M TOO SLEEPY...
I DON'T THINK RACE IS AWAKE YET.
WE DON'T HAVE VERY MUCH FOOD. WE ONLY PACKED ENOUGH FOR LUNCH YESTERDAY.
SNIFF-SNIFF! AND I SMELL FUEL. WE COULDN'T START A FIRE EVEN IF WE HAD MATCHES! ONE OF THE FUEL TANKS MUST HAVE RUPTURED!
BUT WE CAN'T GO OUTSIDE!
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO BE HERE FOR A WHILE, BOY. AND UNTIL RACE FEELS BETTER, WE'RE ON OUR OWN.
WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

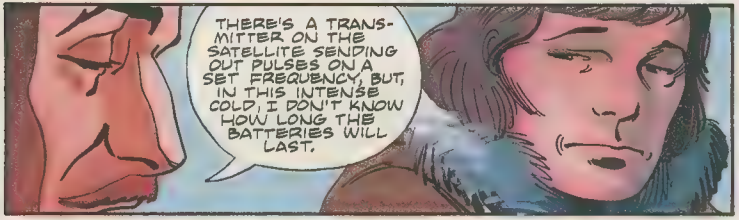
ANOTHER CUP OF HOT CHOCOLATE, DOCTOR?
THANKS. AT LEAST THE STORM'S LET UP SO WE CAN SEARCH AGAIN.
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT. NOT ONLY CAN'T WE SEE ANY TRACE OF RACE OR JONNY, BUT THERE'S NO READING ON THE SATELLITE BEACON.
WELL, THERE'S A LOT OF TERRITORY TO BE SEARCHED. AND THE PILOTS ARE **EXHAUSTED**. I'M ORDERING HALF OF THEM DOWN TO REST--OTHERWISE, WE'LL HAVE **MORE** MISSING PLANES.
AND THAT INCLUDES YOU, DENISE MALLORY!
I'M IN BETTER SHAPE THAN **YOU**, COLONEL! AND I **KNOW** WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE SOMEONE GO INTO THAT WILDERNESS AND NEVER RETURN.
I'M GOING TO FIND THAT BOY!
YOU WON'T DO HIM ANY GOOD IF YOU PLOW HIS FATHER INTO THE SIDE OF A MOUNTAIN.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVE A LACK OF VOLUNTEERS.
EVEN SLEAZEBALL, OUTBACK OUTFITS LIKE **LOOSE CANNON FREIGHT** AND THE **KITE BROTHERS** HAVE SHOWN UP TO VOLUNTEER.
LOOSE CANNON? I **KNOW** THAT MAN!

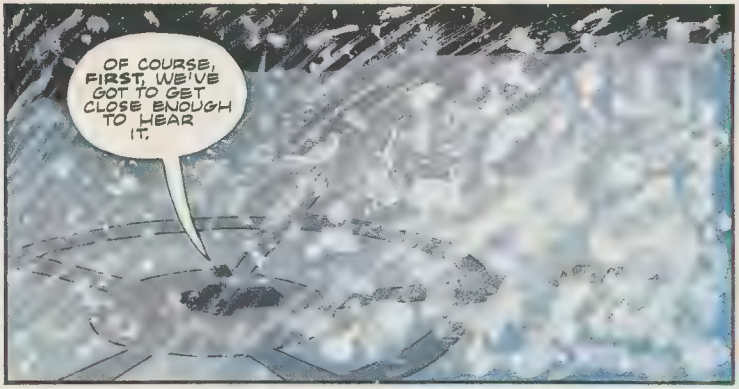
IT SAYS HERE: "ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING FACETS OF COLD-LAND SURVIVAL IS **DEHYDRATION.** ASSURE YOURSELF OF A SUPPLY OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER."
RICHARDSON'S SURVIVAL TIPS
I DON'T THINK HALF A THERMOS IS GOING TO LAST US VERY LONG. WE'LL HAVE TO **MAKE** SOME, I GUESS.
DAD SAYS THAT IT TAKES LESS ENERGY TO MELT SNOW THAN TO MELT ICE; EVEN THOUGH YOU NEED TO MELT **MORE** OF IT.
THAT'S GOOD, 'CAUSE WE HAVE **PLENTY** OF SNOW!
THERE'S STILL LIGHT COMING THROUGH THE WINDOW, EVEN WITH THE SNOW, SO ANYTHING **BLACK** SHOULD BE THE **WARMEST** THING ON THE SHIP.
THERE. NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WAIT.
SNF
THE BOOK SAYS WE SHOULD INVENTORY OUR SURVIVAL GEAR.
I WONDER IF THAT THING WE WERE USING TO FIND THE SATELLITE COUNTS AS SURVIVAL GEAR...?

Whoo! SURE IS MEAN COLD OUT THERE, YOU FIND ANYTHING?
NOPE. CAN'T STAY OUT LONG--WINGS KEEP ICIN' UP.
WHO'S F'R COFFEE?
ANYTHING, SO LONG AS IT'S HOT!
DR. QUEST... DID YOU HAVE ANY LUCK?
NOTHING. I WAS HOPING THAT RACE WOULD'VE GOT THE RADIO GOING BY NOW.
I THINK WE MUST BE GETTING CLOSE, THOUGH. ONCE I GET SOME WARM FOOD INSIDE ME, I'LL BE READY TO GO OUT...
NO, DOCTOR. NONE OF US IS GOING OUT AGAIN.
WHAT? WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP!
WE'RE NOT, BUT THE STORM'S PICKING UP AGAIN AND WE'VE BEEN AT THIS SINCE BEFORE DAWN. I'M CALLING OFF THE SEARCH FOR NOW.
MY HUSBAND WAS LOST OUT THERE, SO I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL... BUT HE'S RIGHT, DOC. WE CAN USE THE REST.
WHAT WERE YOU GUYS SEARCHING FOR OUT THERE?
A SATELLITE... ONE THAT PREDICTED STORMS, IRONICALLY ENOUGH.


"It was an attempt to measure how much damage has been done to the OZONE LAYER, and to correlate that with the erratic weather patterns around the globe...


"But something went wrong... something ALWAYS seems to go wrong... and the satellite, instead of beaming its data back to earth, re-entered the atmosphere and crashed into this desolate wasteland."


There's a transmitter on the satellite sending out pulses on a set frequency, but, in this intense cold, I don't know how long the batteries will last.


Of course, FIRST, we've got to get close enough to hear it.

C'MON, RACE. DRINK A LITTLE MORE. IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!
DON' WORRY, KID. WE'LL FIND TH' SATELLITE... THAT SCANNER'S BEEPIN' AWAY...
HEY, THE CONTROLS DON' ANSWER... ICE ON TH' FLAPS! LOOK OUT!
HE STILL THINKS IT'S BEFORE THE CRASH! I THINK RACE IS REALLY SICK.
SURRP SURRP
AND WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A RADIO WE CAN CALL ON FOR HELP!
RACE SAID HE HEARD THE BEEPS FROM THE SATELLITE. I WONDER IF WE CRASHED NEAR IT...?
WE MUST HAVE! I BET IT'S REALLY CLOSE!
BEEEP BEEEP BEE

BOY, IT SURE ISN'T FAIR. THEY'RE GONNA FIND THAT DUMB OL' SATELLITE BEFORE THEY FIND US. YEAH, THEY'RE GONNA FIND THAT...
BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP
Hmmmm...
IT SAYS... "WEAR LAYERS OF CLOTHING AND DON'T BECOME OVER-HEATED."
IT SAYS... "TRAVEL AT A STEADY PACE AND DON'T BECOME DISORIENTED."
SEE, BANDIT, IF WE BRING THAT SATELLITE HERE, WHEN THEY FIND IT, THEY FIND US!
AN' THIS WAY I CAN TAKE THE TRACKER AN' SOME SUPPLIES WITH ME.
THE INDIANS CALLED THESE "TRAVOIS."

AN' THESE'LL KEEP ME FROM SINKING INTO THE SNOW!
IT'S ALMOST STOPPED SNOWING. I'D BETTER GET GOING.
NOW I'LL JUST CIRCLE THE PLANE AN' SEE WHERE THE TRACKER BEEPS THE LOUDEST...
'BOUT HERE.
BEEEP
BEEEP
BEEEP
BEEEP
BEEEP
BEEEP
NORTHWEST. NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GO IN A STRAIGHT LINE SOUTHEAST AND WE'LL FIND THE SATELLITE, AND NORTH-WEST'LL BRING US BACK TO THE PLANE. SIMPLE!
LET'S GO, BANDIT. RACE IS ASLEEP, AN' WE WANT TO FIND THE SATELLITE BEFORE IT GETS DARK.

HOW FAR AWAY C'IN IT BE?

WILD JIM? WILD JIM CANNON? IS THAT YOU?
YEP. HOW'S IT GOING, DOC?
I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU'D ENDED UP OUT HERE.
YOU CAME BECAUSE RACE AND JONNY WERE IN DANGER? I APPRECIATE THAT.
RACER? IS HE ON THAT PLANE?
NOPE, I WAS JUST IN THE MOOD FOR THIRTY, FORTY HOURS OF CONTINUOUS FLYIN'. KEEPS THE NERVES SHARP.
AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT LIKE RACER GIVES A DAMN ABOUT ME ANYMORE. WE BOTH KNOW WHAT I'M LIKE. GIVEN THE CHANCE, I'D BETRAY HIM AGAIN.
YOU'RE A LOT HARDER ON YOURSELF THAN RACE EVER WAS.
MY PILOT'S GETTING SOME SACK TIME THIS TRIP. I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU FLEW THE QUEST ONE.
WHY NOT? IT'S ONLY LIFE AND DEATH... AND I'VE GOT A SPARE HOUR.
THEN YOU'D BETTER GET A MOVE ON. THERE'S ANOTHER STORM FRONT MOVING IN FROM THE NORTH. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER WE CAN SEARCH.

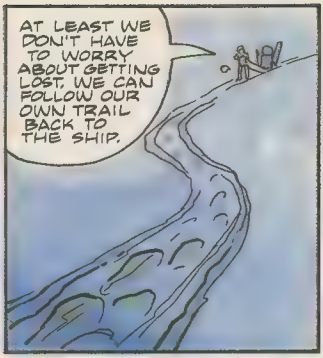
WUFFF
SRWUFFF
BOY, BANDIT! WE'RE NEVER GONNA FIND THE SATELLITE AT THIS RATE!
I WISH I HAD SNOWSHOES FOR YOU, BUT I WOULDN'T KNOW HOW TO TIE THEM ON.
GRRRR
WHAT IS IT, BOY? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
OH!
RRRRRR

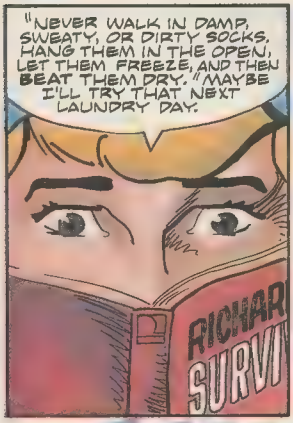
GRRRR
GRRRRRRR
UM...BANDIT, I DON'T THINK THIS IS A VERY GOOD TIME TO FIGHT.
WE MUST BE IN HIS TERRITORY...
...LET'S GO THIS WAY...
GRRRRRR
UH-OH. MAYBE THIS WAY WOULD BE BETTER...
HE'S NOT FOLLOWING US. WE'RE OKAY...

...NOOWWWW!
PLUPPPLLL
PLLPUPUPUPUPLLL
Uffff...
...THE SATELLITE!

C'MON, BANDIT. WE'VE GOTTA GET THE TRAVOIS BACK, SO WE CAN PULL THE SATELLITE!
UH-OH. TH' WOLF'S STILL THERE, BANDIT.
RACE SAYS THAT WOLVES DON'T LIKE TO EAT PEOPLE. MAYBE WE CAN GET HIM TO BACK OFF...
IT'S WORKING!
UFFFF! THIS IS A LOT HEAVIER THAN I THOUGHT!
I WONDER HOW MUCH LONGER HE'S GONNA FOLLOW US...?

LET'S SEE... "DANGEROUS MAMMALS: THE WATER BUFFALO MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS. ITS SHORT TEMPER MAKES IT EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS..."
LUCKY THERE ARE NO WATER BUFFALOES HERE, HUH, BANDIT?


AT LEAST WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GETTING LOST. WE CAN FOLLOW OUR OWN TRAIL BACK TO THE SHIP.


"NEVER WALK IN DAMP, SWEATY, OR DIRTY SOCKS. HANG THEM IN THE OPEN, LET THEM FREEZE, AND THEN BEAT THEM DRY." MAYBE I'LL TRY THAT NEXT LAUNDRY DAY.
RICHAR
SURVI

THE WOLF DISAPPEARED. WE MUST BE OUT OF HIS TERRITORY. WE'RE OKAY NOW!

THE SNOW'S STARTED AGAIN!

THE TRAIL IS MOSTLY FILLED IN. I SHOULD CHECK THE COMPASS TO MAKE SURE WE'RE GOING NORTHWEST!
OH, NO! THE COMPASS IS GONE! IT MUST'VE FALLEN OUT WHEN WE TUMBLED DOWN THAT HILL!
AND IT'S TOO CLOUDY TO SEE THE SUN!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE...
THERE'S A CAVE. AT LEAST WE CAN GET OUT OF THE STORM.

ELSEWHERE...
WINGS'RE ICING UP, DOC. WE COULD END UP CRASHING OUT HERE OURSELVES.
TIME T'THINK 'BOUT HEADING BACK.
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. I...
WAIT A SECOND! I THINK I'M GETTING SOMETHING!
THIS IS THE AIRPORT DO YOU READ ME?
LOUD AND CLEAR.
ROGERS HERE. I'M CALLING OFF THE SEARCH. THERE'S A MASSIVE STORM FRONT HEADING OVER THE AREA. COME IN NOW. IF YOU DON'T, YOU MAY NOT LIVE TO REGRET IT!
WHAT THE HELL! WHO WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER?

BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP
GOOD THING THIS FLASHLIGHT WORKS, HUH, BANDIT?
GEE! LOOK AT ALL THE OLD JUNK! IT LOOKS LIKE STUFF FROM A MUSEUM!
IT LOOKS LIKE FURS AND TRAPS, ALL ROTTED TO DUST/ AND THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE HERE.
SNIF SNIF
THIS COULD BE COWBOY STUFF! I BET IT'S MORE'N FIFTY YEARS OLD!
"THIS BE MY LAST TESTAMENT. FEBRUARY 12, 1817..." GOSH.
"THE OTHERS ARE DEAD, OR TOOK. MAYBE I'M DEAD, TOO. POWDER'S GONE, SHOT'S GONE, HOPE'S GONE..."

"THE STORM'S LET UP SOME, BUT I'M WEAK AND HAZY-MINDED FROM HUNGER."
There's one long chance, I seen the sun rise through the cave mouth, so I know where the rest promised to meet up. I ain't got another night alone left in me.
And I ain't got the strength left to carry my plews* and kit. So they be yours, stranger, or leave 'em for the next poor sodder.
*Beaver pelts, by any other name!--D!
"'PRECIATE IT, J."
"J." HIS NAME WAS PROBABLY JONNY TOO!
HE SAW THE SUNRISE THROUGH HERE! THAT MEANS EAST IS THIS WAY!

AND THIS WAY IS NORTH, AND SO THIS WAY IS NORTHWEST!
C'MON, BANDIT.
BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP
BEEEP BEEEP BEEEP
SPLUT
BEEEP BE----*
THUNK!

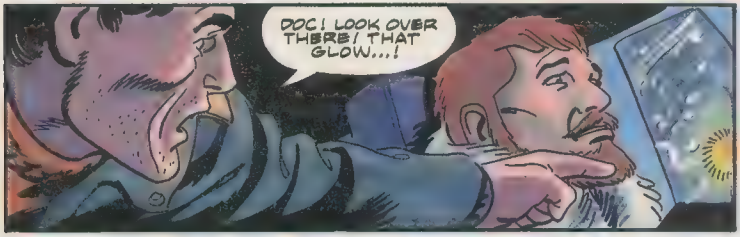
BRRRR! IT'S SURE COLD! YOU OKAY, RACE?
DON'T WORRY... 'BOUT ME, KID...
RRRRRRRRR
DID YOU HEAR THAT, RACE? RACE? IT SOUNDS LIKE A PLANE!
IT'S THE QUEST ONE!
DAD! DAD!
THEY CAN'T SEE ME! AND THE TRANSMITTER'S NOT WORKING!
THEY'RE GOING AWAY!

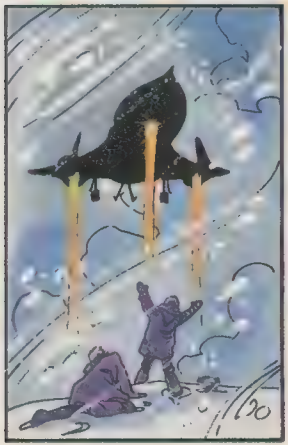
THERE'S NOTHING TO SIGNAL WITH! IT'S SNOWING SO HARD THEY WON'T EVEN SEE THE FLARE GUN!
IF ONLY I COULD GET THE SHIP TO START, EVEN A LITTLE! WE'VE GOT ENOUGH GAS...
...THE GAS!
COME ON, RACE! YOU'VE GOTTA GET UP! WE'VE GOT TO RUN!
TOO TIRED, KID!
HURRY, RACE! UH... JADE'S WAITING FOR YOU! YEAH! JADE'S OUT THERE, RACE!
JADE? WHERE?
COME ON, BANDIT! JADE, RACE! JADE!
THIS HAD BETTER WORK! OR WE'LL BE IN WORSE TROUBLE THAN BEFORE!
FRROOOOSSSHHHH

BARROOOMMM!

NOTHING.

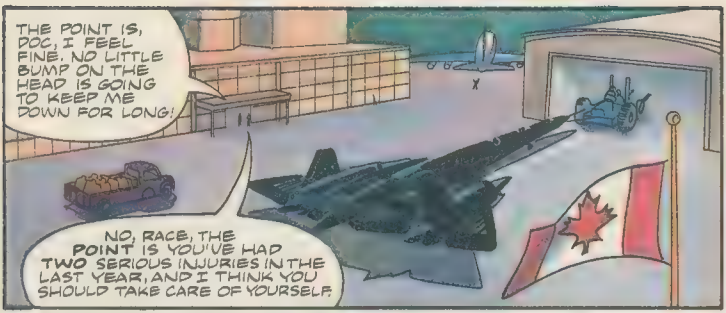
THE BATTERIES MUST BE DEAD, AND WE WERE SO CLOSE! IN THIS STORM THERE'S NO WAY TO SEE--

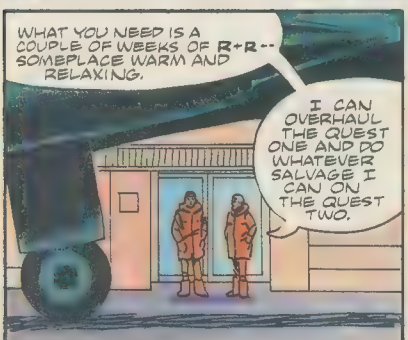

DOC! LOOK OVER THERE! THAT GLOW...!

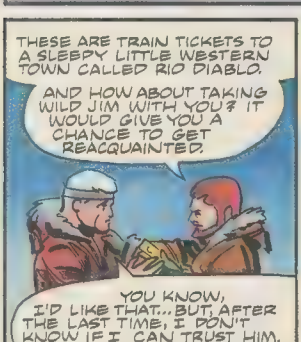


DAD!
SON!
COULD WE DO THIS INSIDE WHERE IT'S WARMER?
YARP
YARP

SOMEWHAT LATER...
THEN YOU GUYS ARE STUCK HERE, TOO?
'FRAID SO, SON. BUT WE HAVE FOOD AND LIGHT AND HEAT, AND WE CAN EASILY RIDE OUT THIS STORM.
YOU'RE THE ONE I'M WORRIED ABOUT, OLD FRIEND. HOW'S THE HEAD?
NOT BAD, THOUGH I WISH I KNEW WHY I KEEP THINKING THAT JADE IS HERE!
COULD BE AN AFTEREFFECT OF THE CONCUSSION. YOU TOOK QUITE A WALLOP.
THIS HASN'T BEEN A GOOD YEAR FOR YOU, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
SEE? "LAC DU IROQUOIS" IS LAKE MICHIGAN, AND THIS IS LAKE ERIE...
I KNOW... BUT I THINK THINGS ARE LOOKING UP!
end







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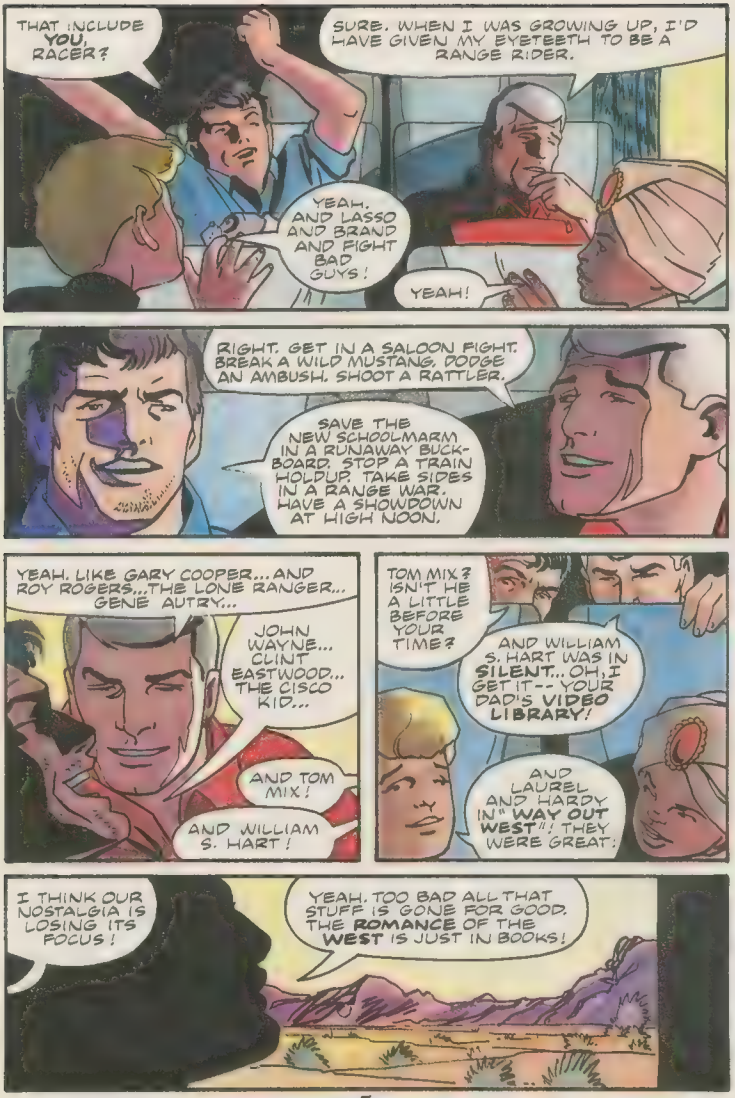
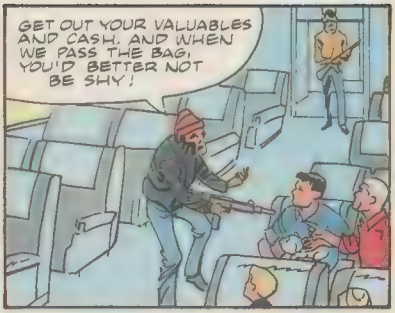
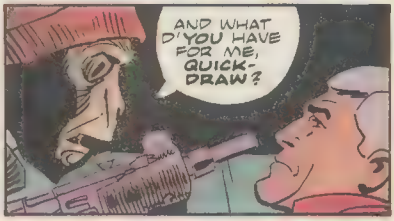
GOSH, RACE...THIS IS JUST LIKE A MOVIE! THERE'S SAND AND CACTUS AND EVERYTHING!
AND I THINK I SAW A WOLF BACK THERE! IT IS VERY EXCITING, IS IT NOT?
UH-HUH. I'LL TELL YOU, HAJ, THERE'S NOT ANYONE ON EARTH WHO DOESN'T WANT TO BE A COWBOY, AT LEAST A LITTLE.
KINGS OF THE WEST
WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS • WRITER
MARC HEMPEL • PENCILLER/LETTERER
MARK WHEATLEY • PENCILLER/INKER/COLORIST
KATHRYN MAYER • LETTERER/COLORIST
DIANA SCHUTZ • EDITOR

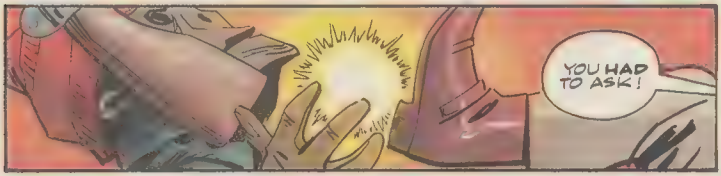

THAT INCLUDE YOU, RACER?
SURE. WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, I'D HAVE GIVEN MY EYETEETH TO BE A RANGE RIDER.
YEAH. AND LASSO AND BRAND AND FIGHT BAD GUYS!
YEAH!
RIGHT. GET IN A SALOON FIGHT. BREAK A WILD MUSTANG. DODGE AN AMBUSH. SHOOT A RATTLER.
SAVE THE NEW SCHOOLMARM IN A RUNAWAY BUCKBOARD. STOP A TRAIN HOLDUP. TAKE SIDES IN A RANGE WAR. HAVE A SHOWDOWN AT HIGH NOON.
YEAH. LIKE GARY COOPER... AND ROY ROGERS... THE LONE RANGER... GENE AUTRY...
JOHN WAYNE... CLINT EASTWOOD... THE CISCO KID...
AND TOM MIX!
AND WILLIAM S. HART!
TOM MIX? ISN'T HE A LITTLE BEFORE YOUR TIME?
AND WILLIAM S. HART WAS IN SILENT... OH, I GET IT -- YOUR DAD'S VIDEO LIBRARY!
AND LAUREL AND HARDY IN "WAY OUT WEST"! THEY WERE GREAT.
I THINK OUR NOSTALGIA IS LOSING ITS FOCUS!
YEAH. TOO BAD ALL THAT STUFF IS GONE FOR GOOD. THE ROMANCE OF THE WEST IS JUST IN BOOKS!

THE OLD WEST HAS BEEN PAVED OVER, HOMOGENIZED, AND DIGITIZED OUT OF EXISTENCE. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT!
12 MILES
EVERYTHING IS SOFT AND EASY AND COMPLICATED. THERE'S NO ROOM FOR SWIFT JUSTICE AND QUICK TRUTH!
WHERE ONE STRONG MAN COULD REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE... NO FENCES...NO LIES...
YOU WERE ON YOUR OWN!
POW! POW! POW!
POW... oops.

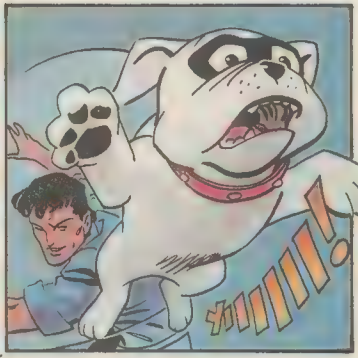
EVERYBODY, FREEZE! COOPERATE AND YOU WON'T BE DAMAGED!


GET OUT YOUR VALUABLES AND CASH. AND WHEN WE PASS THE BAG, YOU'D BETTER NOT BE SHY!


AND WHAT D'YOU HAVE FOR ME, QUICK-DRAW?


YOU HAD TO ASK!

HOLD IT, YOU! I SAID, HOLD IT... OR I'LL...

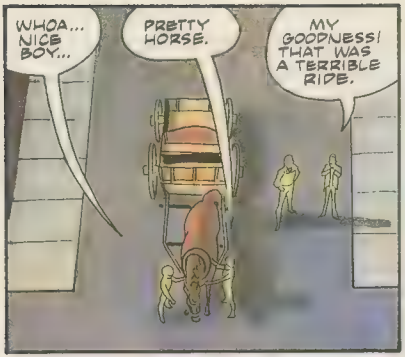

YIIIII!

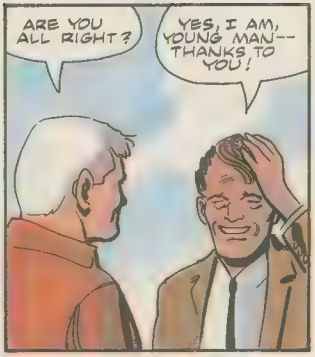
YAAAAA! GET IT OFF ME! MAD DOG!
KRAK
WHAM!
HOW'D THEY GET ON BOARD? THE TRAIN NEVER STOPPED...
A HELICOPTER, MAYBE?
COME ON!
AND THERE IT IS!
DID YOU GET THE MAIL?
NO TIME! TAKE OFF! TAKE OFF!
HEY! WHO'S THAT?

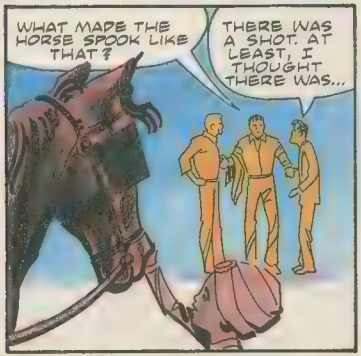
PULL THAT LADDER UP, YOU IDIOTS!
WELL? DID YOU CONVINCE THEM TO GIVE THEMSELVES UP?
VERY CUTE. WHAT KEPT YOU?

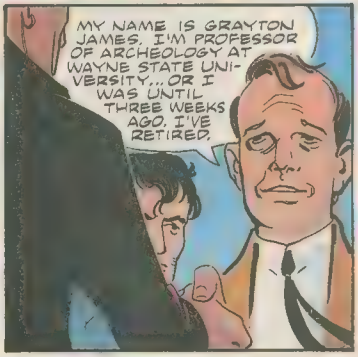
SO THIS IS RIO DIABLO. IT LOOKS SO...NORMAL.
YEP. LIKE I SAID, EVERYTHING'S BEEN HOMOGENIZED. NOTHING EXCITING HAPPENS AROUND HERE NOW.
WELL, THERE WAS THE TRAIN ROBBERY...
YEAH, BUT THAT COULD'VE HAPPENED ANYWHERE.
I WONDER WHAT THEY WERE AFTER...? THOSE TWO BABIES WE CAPTURED WERE TOUGH. THEY WON'T--
WHOA! HELP! HELP!
LOOK! IT IS A RUNAWAY!
TAXI!
QUICK! FOLLOW THAT BUCKBOARD!
YOU GOT IT, BUD.

WHOA!
TAXI
HOLD IT STEADY!
OKAY, BOY. YOU'RE A NICE HORSE! TIME TO STOP! WHOA, BOY...
GAS
...WHOA!

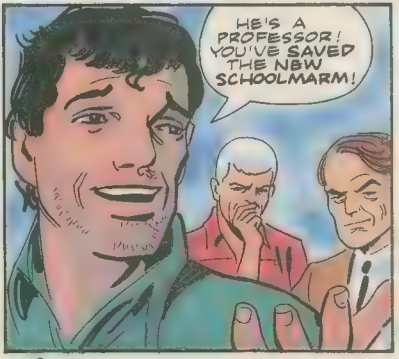

WHOA... NICE BOY...
PRETTY HORSE.
MY GOODNESS! THAT WAS A TERRIBLE RIDE.


ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, I AM, YOUNG MAN-- THANKS TO YOU!


WHAT MADE THE HORSE SPOOK LIKE THAT?
THERE WAS A SHOT. AT LEAST, I THOUGHT THERE WAS...

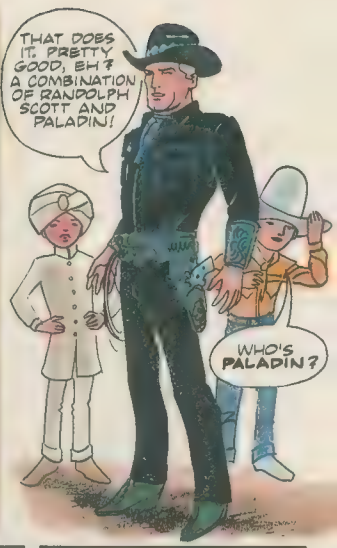

MY NAME IS GRAYTON JAMES. I'M PROFESSOR OF ARCHEOLOGY AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY... OR I WAS UNTIL THREE WEEKS AGO. I'VE RETIRED.

GLAD TO MEET YOU, PROF... PROFESSOR JAMES? DID YOU HEAR THAT, RACE?


HE'S A PROFESSOR! YOU'VE SAVED THE NEW SCHOOLMARM!

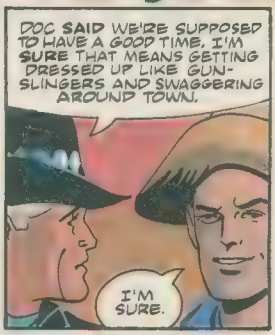
I JUST WISH THESE ACCIDENTS WOULD STOP HAPPENING TO ME.
GOSH, HAVE THERE BEEN MORE?
YES, INDEED. I CAME OUT HERE TO ESCAPE THE WILD EXCITEMENT OF ACADEMIA AND TO START A QUIET LITTLE DUDE RANCH. BUT THESE INCIDENTS HAVE BADLY DIMINISHED MY CAPITAL.
THE LAST OF MY SUPPLIES ARE ON THAT TRAIN.
THE TRAIN, HUH? WHY WOULD ANYBODY SABOTAGE A DUDE RANCH?
COMPETITION. THERE'S ALREADY A LARGE WESTERN THEME PARK NEAR HERE.
WHAT'S THAT?
YOU MEAN YOU NEVER HEARD OF "SWITCH" MONROE, THE SINGIN' BUCKAROO? HE'S A LEGEND AROUND HERE!
I'VE BEEN TO HIS "OLD WEST UNIVERSE" THREE TIMES!
I'M A LITTLE SHORT-HANDED RIGHT NOW. WOULD YOU BOYS LIKE A JOB?
SORRY, I'M JUST ON VACATION.
AND SPENDING TWO WEEKS BUILDING FENCES AND MUCKING OUT STALLS ISN'T WHAT WE HAD IN MIND.
WE'RE HERE TO HAVE FUN AND FIND WHAT'S LEFT OF THE OLD WEST!

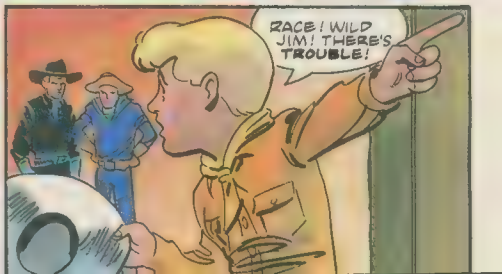
AND SO...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I DO NOT THINK IT IS YOU.

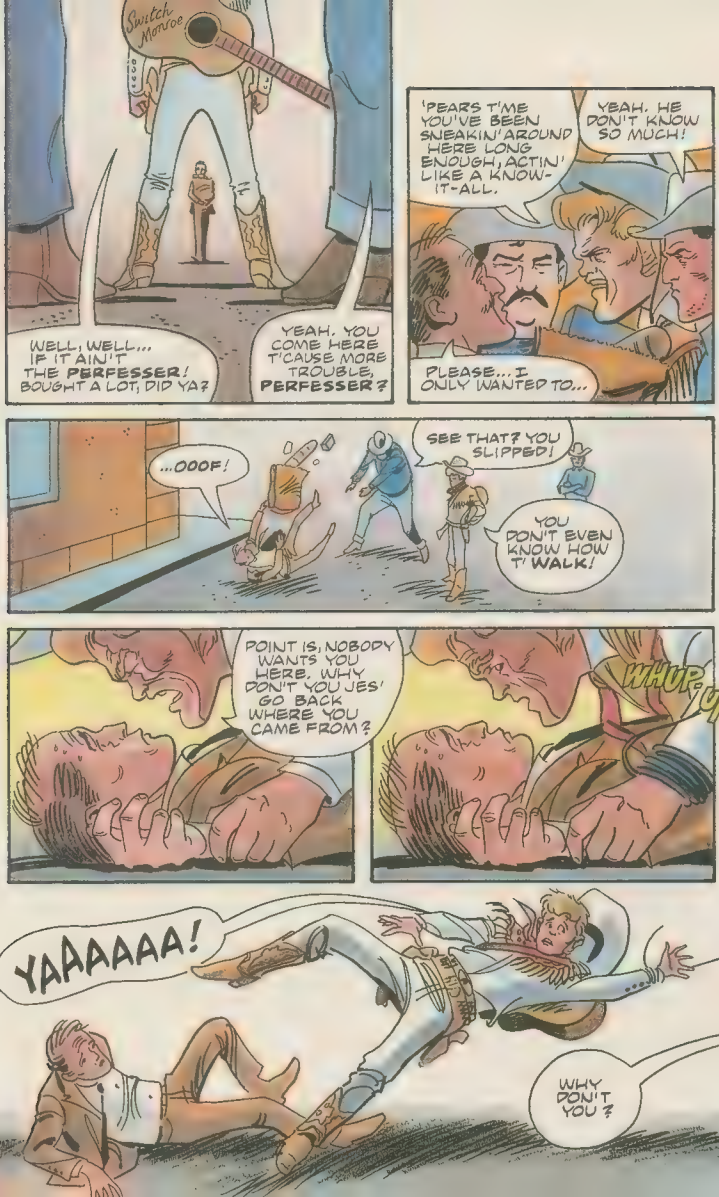

THAT DOES IT. PRETTY GOOD, EH? A COMBINATION OF RANDOLPH SCOTT AND PALADIN!
WHO'S PALADIN?

KIDS TODAY! NO CULTURAL HERITAGE!
NOW, I PREFER THE BRONCO LANE LOOK, MYSELF.

CHARGE ALL THIS TO QUEST RESEARCH.
CAN YOU DO THAT?
SURE.

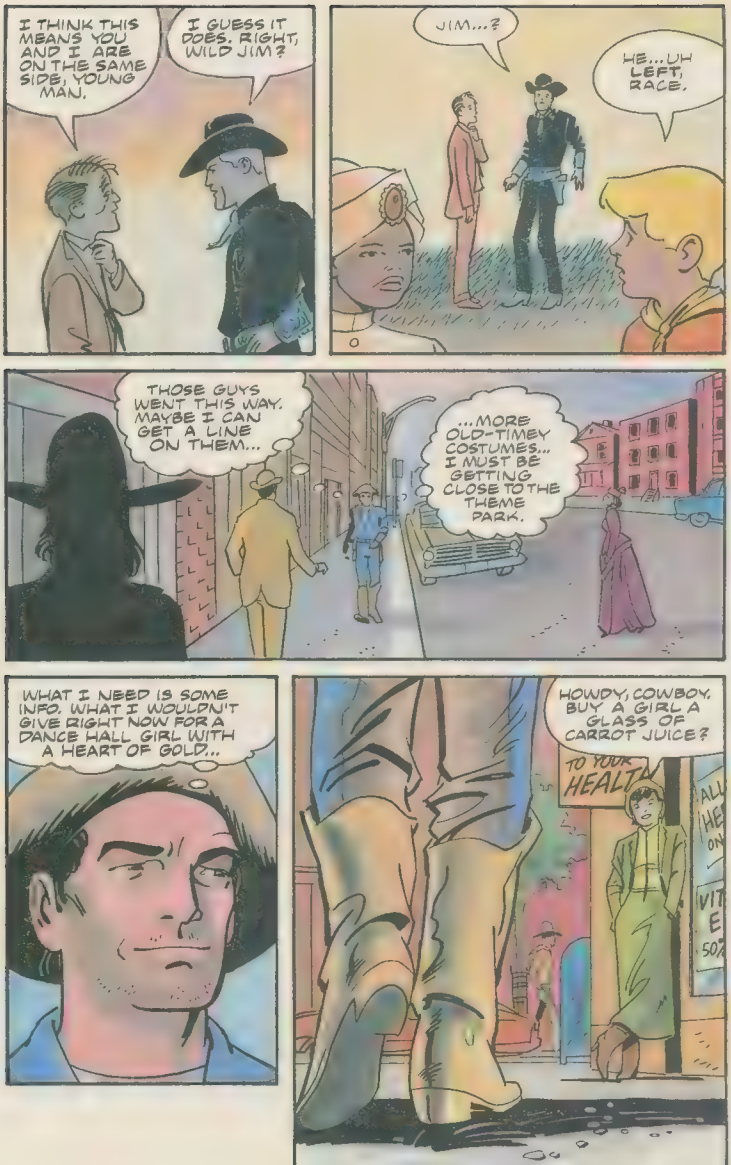

DOC SAID WE'RE SUPPOSED TO HAVE A GOOD TIME. I'M SURE THAT MEANS GETTING DRESSED UP LIKE GUNSLINGERS AND SWAGGERING AROUND TOWN.
I'M SURE.

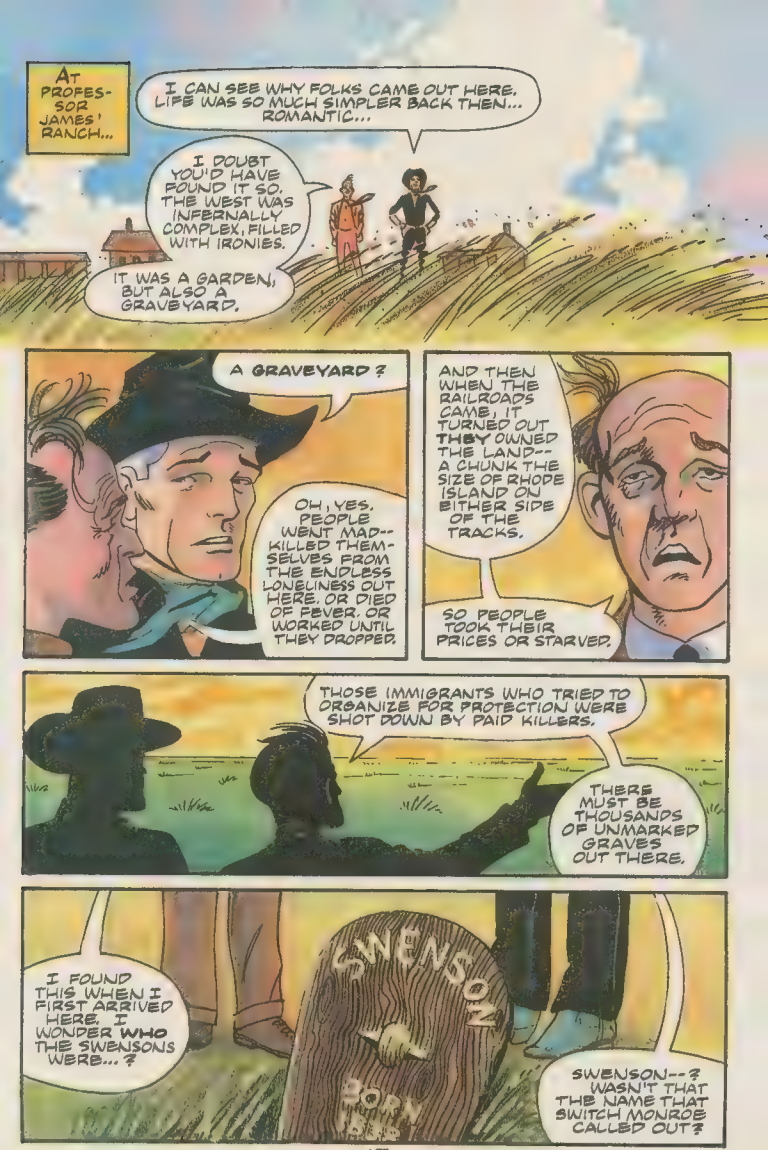

RACE! WILD JIM! THERE'S TROUBLE!

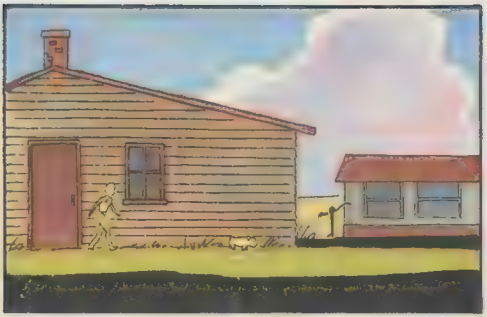

Switch Monroe
WELL, WELL... IF IT AIN'T THE PERFESSER! BOUGHT A LOT, DID YA?
YEAH. YOU COME HERE T'CAUSE MORE TROUBLE, PERFESSER?
'PEARS T'ME YOU'VE BEEN SNEAKIN' AROUND HERE LONG ENOUGH, ACTIN' LIKE A KNOW-IT-ALL.
YEAH. HE DON'T KNOW SO MUCH!
PLEASE... I ONLY WANTED TO...
...OOOF!
SEE THAT? YOU SLIPPED!
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW T' WALK!
POINT IS, NOBODY WANTS YOU HERE. WHY DON'T YOU JES' GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM?
WHUP
UP
YAAAAAA!
WHY DON'T YOU?

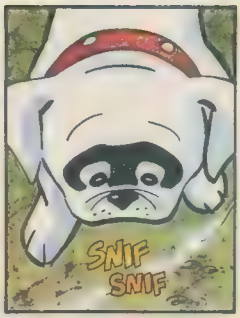
SEEMS TO ME I HEAR A LITTLE NEW JERSEY UNDER THAT DRAWL.
WHY, YOU--!
GIT OUTER THE WAY! I GOT 'IM! I GOT 'IM!
WUP!
BLANG!

HE SHOT THE GUN OUTTA MY HANDS! OUTTA MY HANDS!
ACTUALLY, I WAS AIMING FOR HIS SHOULDER. DID LOOK IMPRESSIVE, THOUGH.
YOU'LL BE IN TROUBLE WHEN SWENSON HEARS ABOUT THIS!
THIS IS OUR TOWN, SO YOU'D BETTER STAY OUTTA OUR WAY. NONE O' THIS IS YER BUSINESS.
I'M MAKING IT MY BUSINESS.
HE'S ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY THAT!


I THINK THIS MEANS YOU AND I ARE ON THE SAME SIDE, YOUNG MAN.
I GUESS IT DOES. RIGHT, WILD JIM?
JIM...?
HE...UH LEFT, RACE.
THOSE GUYS WENT THIS WAY. MAYBE I CAN GET A LINE ON THEM...
...MORE OLD-TIMEY COSTUMES... I MUST BE GETTING CLOSE TO THE THEME PARK.
WHAT I NEED IS SOME INFO. WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE RIGHT NOW FOR A DANCE HALL GIRL WITH A HEART OF GOLD...
HOWDY, COWBOY. BUY A GIRL A GLASS OF CARROT JUICE?
TO YOUR HEALTH


AT PROFESSOR JAMES' RANCH...
I CAN SEE WHY FOLKS CAME OUT HERE. LIFE WAS SO MUCH SIMPLER BACK THEN... ROMANTIC...
I DOUBT YOU'D HAVE FOUND IT SO. THE WEST WAS INFERNALLY COMPLEX, FILLED WITH IRONIES.
IT WAS A GARDEN, BUT ALSO A GRAVEYARD.
A GRAVEYARD ?
OH, YES. PEOPLE WENT MAD-- KILLED THEMSELVES FROM THE ENDLESS LONELINESS OUT HERE, OR DIED OF FEVER, OR WORKED UNTIL THEY DROPPED.
AND THEN WHEN THE RAILROADS CAME, IT TURNED OUT THEY OWNED THE LAND-- A CHUNK THE SIZE OF RHODE ISLAND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE TRACKS.
SO PEOPLE TOOK THEIR PRICES OR STARVED.
THOSE IMMIGRANTS WHO TRIED TO ORGANIZE FOR PROTECTION WERE SHOT DOWN BY PAID KILLERS.
THERE MUST BE THOUSANDS OF UNMARKED GRAVES OUT THERE.
I FOUND THIS WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED HERE. I WONDER WHO THE SWENSONS WERE...?
SWENSON
BORN
SWENSON--? WASN'T THAT THE NAME THAT SWITCH MONROE CALLED OUT?

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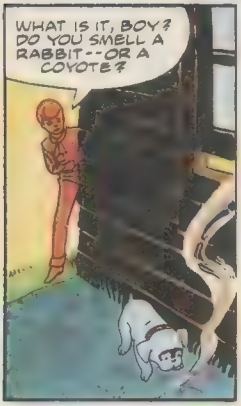
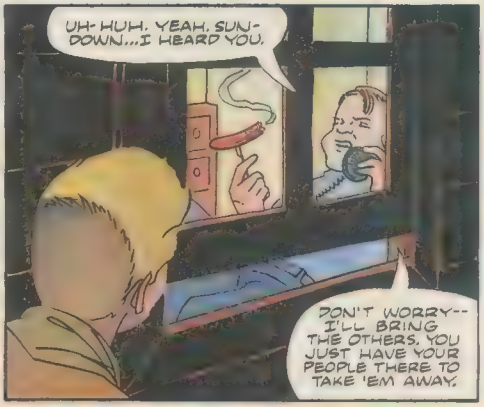
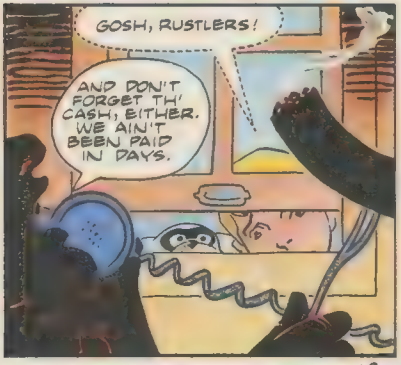
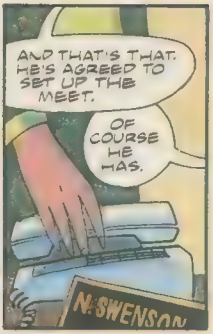
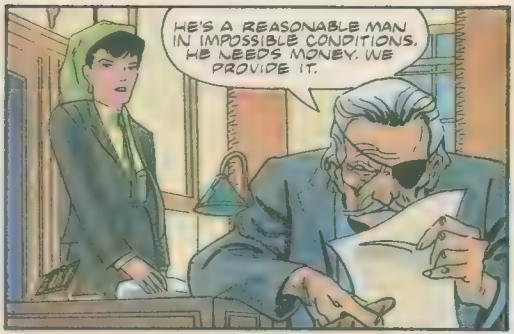

WHAT IS IT, BOY? DO YOU SMELL A RABBIT--OR A COYOTE?

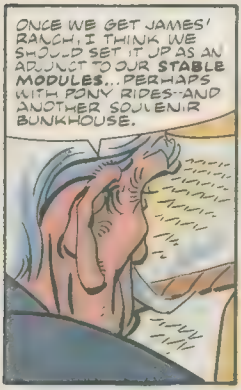

UH-HUH. YEAH, SUN-DOWN...I HEARD YOU.
DON'T WORRY--I'LL BRING THE OTHERS. YOU JUST HAVE YOUR PEOPLE THERE TO TAKE 'EM AWAY.

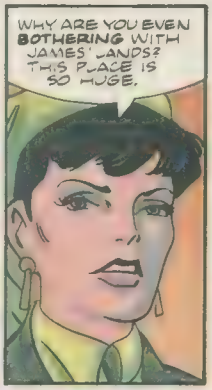

GOSH, RUSTLERS!
AND DON'T FORGET TH' CASH, EITHER. WE AIN'T BEEN PAID IN DAYS.

COME ON, BOY! WE GOTTA FIND RACE!

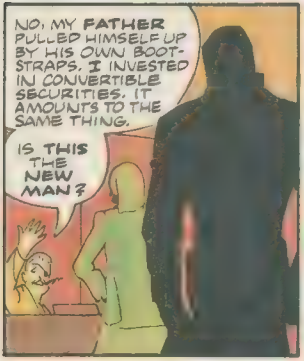

AND THAT'S THAT. HE'S AGREED TO SET UP THE MEET.
OF COURSE HE HAS.
N. SWENSON

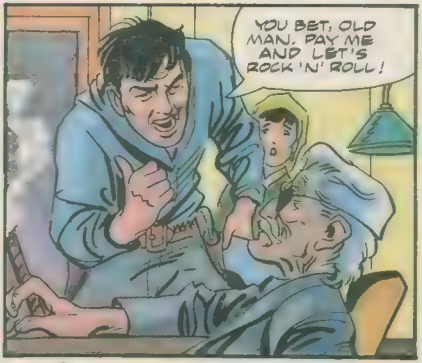

HE'S A REASONABLE MAN IN IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS. HE NEEDS MONEY. WE PROVIDE IT.

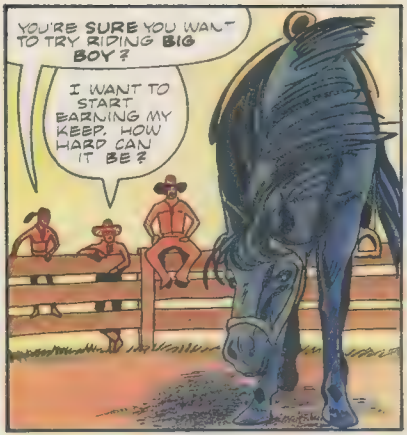

ONCE WE GET JAMES' RANCH, I THINK WE SHOULD SET IT UP AS AN ADJUNCT TO OUR STABLE MODULES... PERHAPS WITH PONY RIDES--AND ANOTHER SOUVENIR BUNKHOUSE.

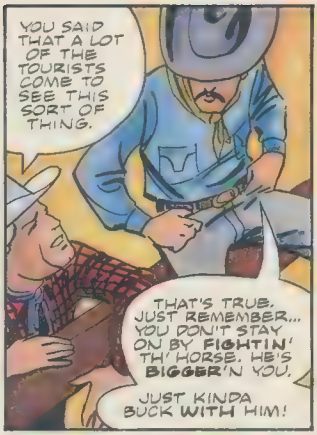

WHY ARE YOU EVEN BOTHERING WITH JAMES' LANDS? THIS PLACE IS SO HUGE.

MY GRANDPARENTS WERE SETTLERS ON THIS LAND. THEY WERE MURDERED BY COMPANY GOONS. EVERYTHING WAS TAKEN FROM US...
LET ME GUESS. YOU PULLED YOURSELF UP BY YOUR OWN BOOTSTRAPS.


NO. MY FATHER PULLED HIMSELF UP BY HIS OWN BOOTSTRAPS. I INVESTED IN CONVERTIBLE SECURITIES. IT AMOUNTS TO THE SAME THING.
IS THIS THE NEW MAN?

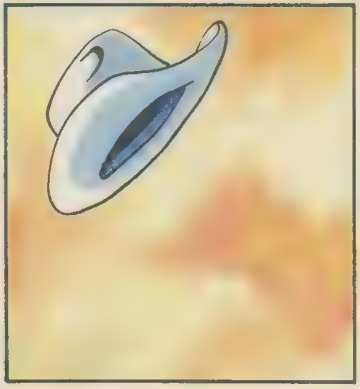

YOU BET, OLD MAN. PAY ME AND LET'S ROCK 'N' ROLL!


YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO TRY RIDING BIG BOY?
I WANT TO START EARNING MY KEEP. HOW HARD CAN IT BE?


YOU SAID THAT A LOT OF THE TOURISTS COME TO SEE THIS SORT OF THING.
THAT'S TRUE. JUST REMEMBER... YOU DON'T STAY ON BY FIGHTIN' TH' HORSE. HE'S BIGGER'N YOU.
JUST KINDA BUCK WITH HIM!

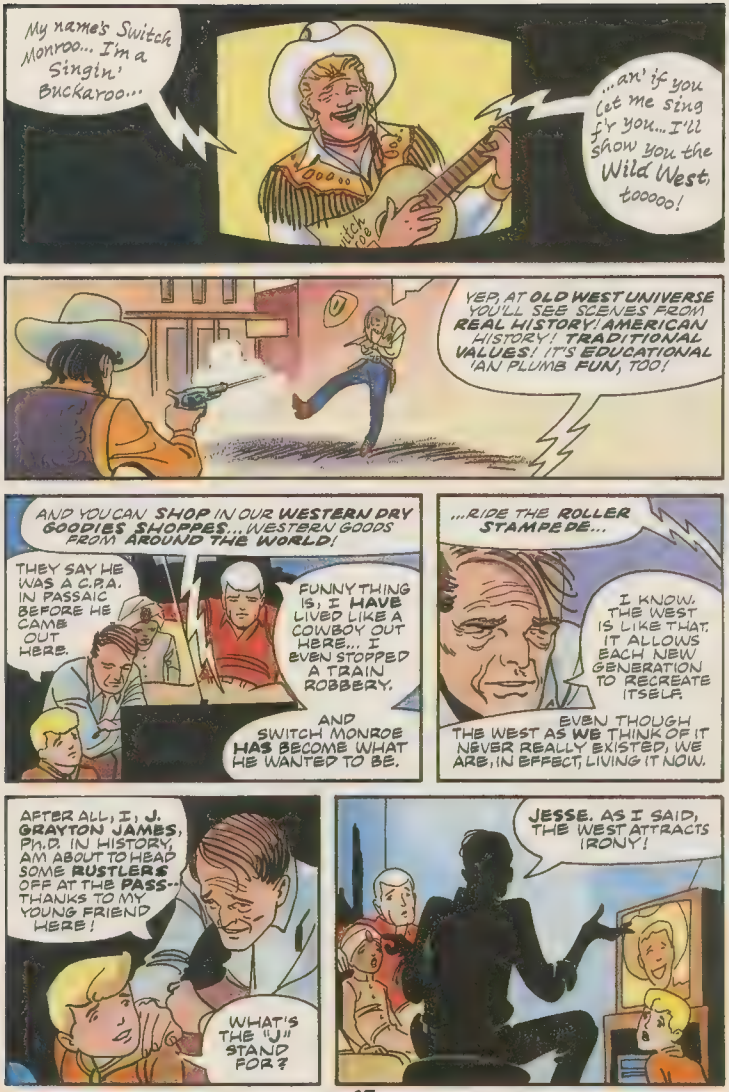
KEEP COUNT, HAJ. I WANT TO KNOW HOW MANY MINUTES I CAN STAY ON THIS BABY.
YES, RACE.

SAY, THIS ISN'T BAD. I THINK I'M GOING TO DO ALL--



EIGHTEEN SECONDS, RACE.

ACTUALLY, FIFTEEN SECONDS AIN'T SO BAD FOR A FIRST TRY.
I'VE SEEN WORSE.
YOU WERE JUST TOO TENSE--THAT'S ALL.
TERROR DOES THAT TO ME.
WHAT YOU NEED IS EXPERIENCE--TEMPERIN'! YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE LIVED IN THIS WORLD A WHILE T'CLIMB ON A HORSE LIKE BIG BOY!
NICE HORSE... ALL IS QUIET... SHH.
LIKE THIS?
DON'T WORRY. HE DOES THIS SORT OF THING TO ME ALL THE TIME.


My name's Switch Monroo... I'm a Singin' Buckaroo...
...an' if you let me sing fy you... I'll show you the Wild West, tooooo!
YEP, AT OLD WEST UNIVERSE YOU'LL SEE SCENES FROM REAL HISTORY! AMERICAN HISTORY! TRADITIONAL VALUES! IT'S EDUCATIONAL 'AN PLUMB FUN, TOO!
AND YOU CAN SHOP IN OUR WESTERN DRY GOODIES SHOPPES... WESTERN GOODS FROM AROUND THE WORLD!
THEY SAY HE WAS A C.P.A. IN PASSAIC BEFORE HE CAMB OUT HERE.
FUNNY THING IS, I HAVE LIVED LIKE A COWBOY OUT HERE... I EVEN STOPPED A TRAIN ROBBERY.
AND SWITCH MONROE HAS BECOME WHAT HE WANTED TO BE.
...RIDE THE ROLLER STAMPEDE...
I KNOW. THE WEST IS LIKE THAT. IT ALLOWS EACH NEW GENERATION TO RECREATE ITSELF.
EVEN THOUGH THE WEST AS WE THINK OF IT NEVER REALLY EXISTED, WE ARE, IN EFFECT, LIVING IT NOW.
AFTER ALL, I, J. GRAYTON JAMES, PH.D. IN HISTORY, AM ABOUT TO HEAD SOME RUSTLERS OFF AT THE PASS-- THANKS TO MY YOUNG FRIEND HERE!
WHAT'S THE "J" STAND FOR?
JESSE. AS I SAID, THE WEST ATTRACTS IRONY!

AN HOUR LATER, OUT OF SIGHT OF THE MAIN HOUSE...
IS EVERYONE HERE?
YEAH; WE'RE HERE!
WHAT'S THE DEAL?
HERE'S THE DEAL: OLD WEST CORP IS OFFERING A TWENTY PERCENT RAISE, PROFIT-SHARING AND HOSPITALIZATION, AND A RAISE AT THE END OF THE BUSINESS YEAR.
SOUNDS GOOD T'ME! I GOT A FAMILY!
I DUNNO. I WANT TO SEE THE C.O.L.A.'S.
YEAH. AND I WANT TO SEE THE CLAUSES ON STOCK OPTIONS.
I WOULDN'T THINK ON THIS TOO LONG. IT COULD GET RIGHT **DANGEROUS** TO STICK AROUND HERE. ACCIDENTS C'N HAPPEN!
WELL, WELL, WELL.... WE THOUGHT THEY'D BE RUSTLING **HORSES**!
HELLO, JADE. BUSINESS GOOD?

IT'S LEGAL. WE'RE JUST TRYING TO OFFER YOUR MEN A BETTER CUT FOR THEIR WORK.
I LIKE YOUR ADDED INCENTIVE...
WHERE DID YOU RENT THESE TWO SHAVED APES?
WHY, YOU--!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, SLIME-BALL.
YOU GOING TO SHOOT ME, TOO, RACER?
WILD JIM! SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WENT. YOU FOUND THE EASY MONEY, AS USUAL!
YEAH, THE MONEY'S REAL GOOD, BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS DEAL...
...I TRUST SWENSON. YOUR PAL JAMES HAS BEEN HOLDING OUT ON YOU.

PEOPLE! IT'S TRUE I CAN'T MATCH SWENSON'S CASH OFFER, BUT I CAN OFFER YOU A BETTER DEAL IN PROFIT SHARE AND STOCK!
SUPPOSE WE TALK IT OVER...?
LOOKS LIKE YOU WIN, FOR NOW.
LOOKS LIKE I DO.
GEE, RACE. IS WILD JIM REALLY ON THEIR SIDE NOW?
I DON'T KNOW, KID.
AT THE AGENCY, WE HAD SOMETHING CALLED THE TROJAN HORSE GAMBIT, WHERE ONE OF US WOULD PRETEND TO SELL OUT, TO GET IN THE ENEMY CAMP.
HE COULD BE TRYING THAT.
OR HE COULD JUST BE AFTER THE MAIN CHANCE. HE'S GOOD AT THAT.
I JUST DON'T KNOW.
TO BE CONTINUED...

KINGS OF THE WEST
PART TWO

WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS · Writer MARC HEMPEL, MARK WHEATLEY, and KATHRYN MAYER · Illustrators DIANA SCHUTZ · Editor

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We are staying at the Dude Ranch of Prof. James, but he may not be in business much longer, 'cause people keep making him have accidents. He thinks it's the guys over at Old West Universe.
BLAM! BLAM!
They're plenty mean, and Jade is working for them.
BLAM BLAM
POW
KA-POW
BLAM! BLAM!
I will [illegible] have time.
SHERIFF! LOOK OUT!
Today we're going over there 'cause Race says, "It's time to stir things
BLAM BLAM

HURRAH!
SOME SHOW!
CLAP CLAP CLAP
THANKEE, FOLKS. 'T'WEREN'T NOTHIN'. IT'S JES' A FLESH WOUND.
GOSH, SHERIFF! THAT WAS GREAT SHOOTING! C'N YOU SHOW US SOME MORE?
I'LL DO M'BEST, LI'L BUDDY!
THROW ALL THESE IN THE AIR AT ONCE, AN' I'LL SEE WHAT I C'N DO.
YOU BET!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
PUNT

PUNT
PUNT
SO, HOW'S IT GOING?
PUNT
PUNT
PUNT
PUNT
PRETTY GOOD. HE'S ON HIS SECOND BATCH AND HASN'T MISSED YET.
STAY BACK FROM THE EDGE SO THE CROWD CAN'T SEE YOU.
I KNOW THE DRILL.
IT MUST BE TIME FOR HIM TO HUMILIATE SOME RUBE.
YEAH. ONE OF THESE DAYS HE'S GONG TO PICK SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING...
OH-OH.
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, FOLKS... LET'S HAVE US AN OLD-TIME SHOOTING MATCH!
ANYBODY CARE T'SHOOT AGAINST OL' SWITCH?
C'MON, NOW! ANYBODY?
ME.
CALL SECURITY. QUICK!

THOSE? THEY'RE SO FAR AWAY.
IT AIN'T SO HARD. JUST SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER. AND REMEMBER... TAKE YOUR TIME.
BRANG
SCK-
ASHH
BRANG
RASSH
UM...
BRANG
BRANG
BRANG
I THOUGHT THE SIGHTS WERE PHONIED ON THAT PISTOL...?
THEY ARE. WHEN DID RACER EVER NEED SIGHTS?
SCRASHH
SCRASSH
GOSH, YOU'RE RIGHT, MR. SWITCH. THIS IS EASY. I GUESS ANYONE CAN SHOOT AS WELL AS YOU, HUH?
BRANG
SCRASSH
ALL RIGHT, SLICK... DROP THE GUN.
COME ALONG QUIETLY.
OLD WEST UNIVERSE
IT WAS...UM...JUST A TRICK, FOLKS! DON'T PAY HIM NO MIND.

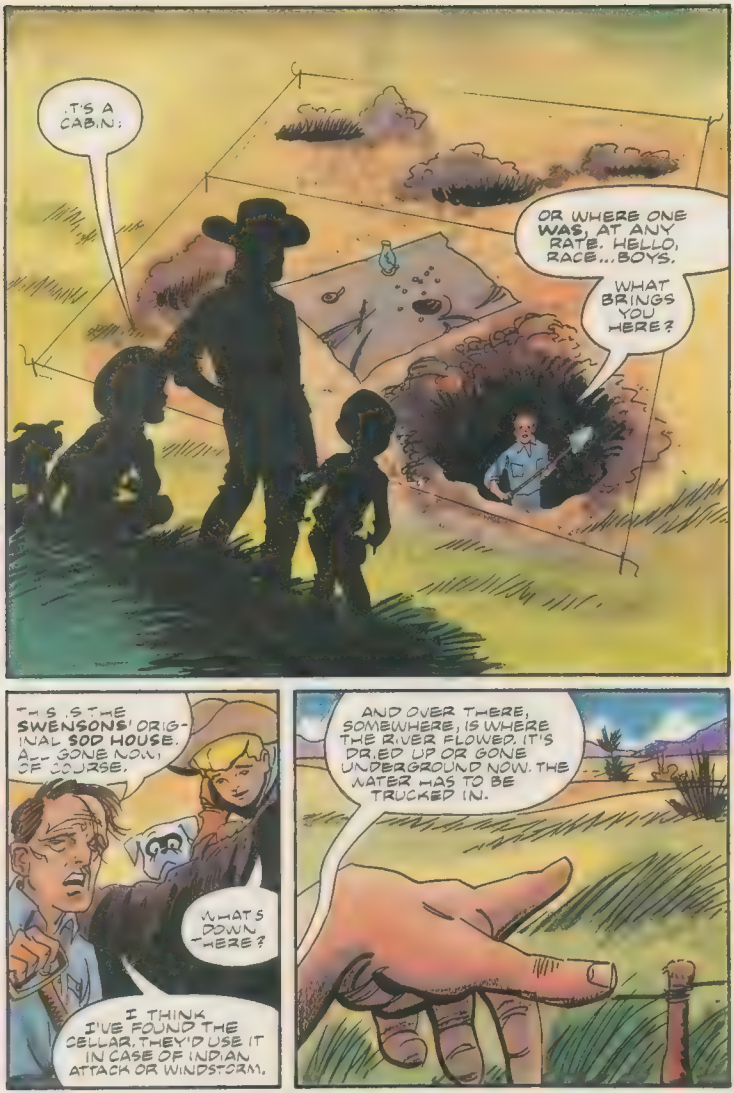
WUK
HEY!
PUTT
HOLD IT, YOU, OR I'LL--
BLAM
BLA BLAM
BLAM
HE MISSED. ALL FIVE SHOTS!
I'LL BET THAT GUN IS RIGGED.
OR HE'S A FAKE!
AW, IT'S ALL FAKE!

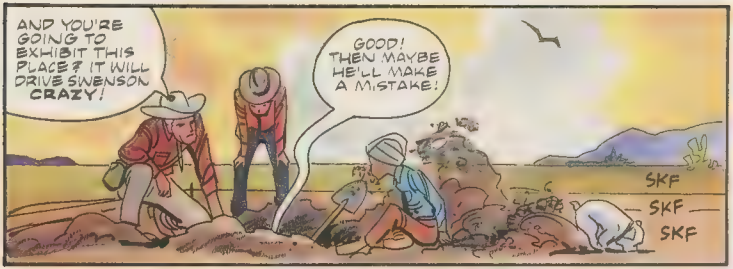
EXCUSE ME, SIR, BUT I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO COME WITH ME.
SURE. HE WAS SHOOTING AT ME--BUT WHY WORRY ABOUT DETAILS, EH?
THEY'RE TAKING HIM AWAY. MAYBE I SHOULD--
HI, JADE! HI, WILD JIM!
JONNY! HADJI!
WELL, WELL. HOW DID YOU KIDS FIND US?
IT WAS SIMPLE. WE THOUGHT SOMEONE MUST BE SHOOTING FOR HIM, SO WE DID NOT LOOK ANYWHERE YOU COULD NOT BE.
AND HERE YOU ARE!
OH.
DO YOU DO ALL HIS SHOOTING FOR HIM?
NO, SOMETIMES THEY USE MINUTE GUNPOWDER CHARGES, SET OFF BY REMOTE SIGNALS.
THE CHARGES ARE PLANTED ALL OVER AND LOOK JUST LIKE TRICK SHOTS.
WOW! AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TOUCH ONE...?
JONNY: NO!
POW!
POW!

AH, MR. BANYON, SO NICE TO SEE YOU.
BANNON. I GUESS YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THE BLACK HATS?
"SWENSON." YOUR FAMILY USED TO OWN THE LAND WHERE JAMES' DUDE RANCH IS. WHY ARE YOU HARASSING M
N. SWENSON
MY GRANDPARENTS WERE IMMIGRANTS WHO CAME TO FARM. THEY WERE DESTROYED BY DROUGHT AND MADNESS...
"THEN YOU KNOW THAT THIS IS A— A LIE...
OLD WEST UNIVERSE
IT'S A SILLY FANTASY--BUT A VERY PROFITABLE ONE.
BUT MY FAMILY CAME HERE TO SUCCEED. AND I HAVE FINALLY SUCCEEDED, IN TERMS THAT THE WEST UNDERSTANDS... WINNER TAKE ALL!
EVEN IF YOU'RE TREATING JAMES THE SAME WAY YOUR PEOPLE WERE TREATED?
THAT, MY DEAR BANYON, IS ONE OF LIFE'S LITTLE IRONIES...
FAUGH! LOOK AT THIS VERMIN!
THIS COUNTRY IS CRAWLING WITH SNAKES AND LIZARDS! I HATE IT!

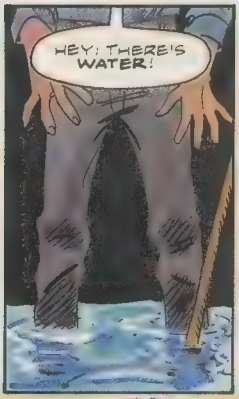
LOOK AT THIS PLACE! EVEN MY OFFICE MUST BE DECORATED IN THIS HICKSVILLE STYLE, IN CASE ONE OF THE RUBES SHOULD LOOK IN! I LOATHE IT!
I HATE THE WEST!
I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT I WOULD DIE HERE, LIKE THE REST OF MY CLAN. I FEEL UNLUCKY HERE.
THEN, WHY STAY?
BECAUSE I MUST SUCCEED HERE!
AND MAKE NO MISTAKE... MY FAMILY WOULD APPLAUD WHAT I AM DOING.
I AM WIPING OUT THEIR FAILURE, EVEN AS I WIPE OUT THEIR MEMORY!
YOUR PROFESSOR IS NO DIFFERENT THAN I, BANYON! ASK HIM WHY HE'S REALLY HERE!

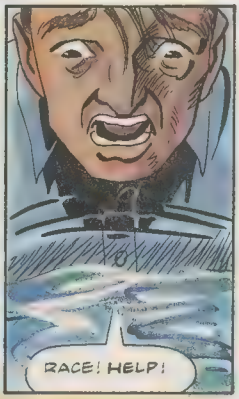
LATER, BACK AT THE RANCH...
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS WHICH DOESN'T QUITE FIT. ALMOST ALL THE MEN HAVE QUIT, AND YET JAMES ISN'T UNHAPPY.
IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE'S WAITING FOR SOMETHING.
AND WHY IS SWENSON SET ON DESTROYING HIM? IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...
RACE, LOOK...
HE GOES OUT ALMOST EVERY DAY.
HMMM... MAYBE IT'S TIME WE FOUND OUT WHERE.
AND SO...
THE TRACKS STILL GO THIS WAY, RACE.
GREAT, KID.
BOY, IT'S HOT.
WE'VE WALKED QUITE A WAYS. MAYBE IT'S TIME TO TURN BACK...
WAIT, RACE. LOOK AT THIS!


IT'S A CABIN.
OR WHERE ONE WAS, AT ANY RATE. HELLO, RACE...BOYS.
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
THIS IS THE SWENSONS' ORIGINAL SOD HOUSE. A-- GONE NOW, OF COURSE.
WHAT'S DOWN THERE?
I THINK I'VE FOUND THE CELLAR. THEY'D USE IT IN CASE OF INDIAN ATTACK OR WINDSTORM.
AND OVER THERE, SOMEWHERE, IS WHERE THE RIVER FLOWED. IT'S DRIED UP OR GONE UNDERGROUND NOW. THE WATER HAS TO BE TRUCKED IN.


AND YOU'RE GOING TO EXHIBIT THIS PLACE? IT WILL DRIVE SWENSON CRAZY!
GOOD! THEN MAYBE HE'LL MAKE A MISTAKE!
SKF
SKF
SKF

I DIDN'T LET ANYONE KNOW THAT I'D FOUND THIS PLACE; SO SWENSON COULDN'T--
THAT'S FUNNY. THE BOTTOM'S MUDDY.

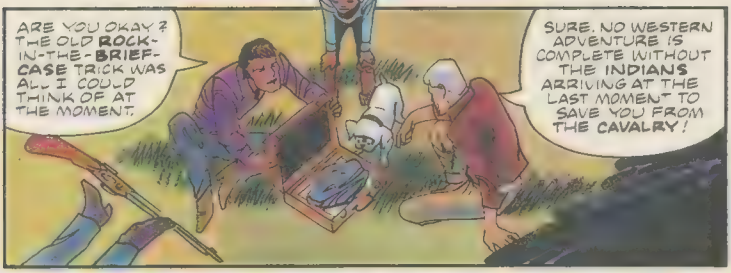

HEY! THERE'S WATER!


RACE! HELP!

KER-SPLURSSHH

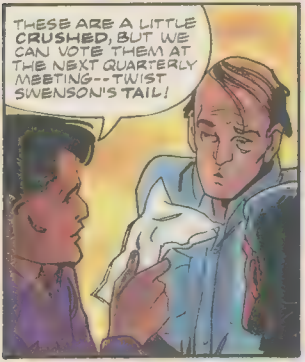
I THINK WE'VE FOUND YOUR RIVER, PROFESSOR.
WATER IS STILL DEAR. PERHAPS I CAN USE THIS TO SUPPORT THE RANCH.
POWW
CHINNG
SCATTER! SOMEBODY'S FIRING AT JS!
I THINK HE'S FIRING FROM THAT RISE OVER THERE.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, RACE?
CHINNG
KACHINNG
IF HE'S REALLY TRYING TO HIT JS, HE'S DOING A LOUSY JOB.
KACHINNG
COVER ME!
WITH WHAT?

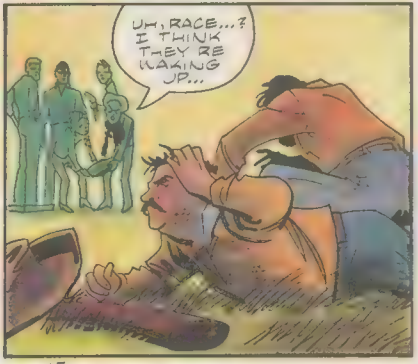
SEVERAL MINUTES LATER...
AH, HERE WE GO...
POW
POW
EEP!
YOU JUST MADE A MISTAKE, TOUGH GUY!
THIS WAS JUST SUPPOSED TO BE A WARNING, BUT I THINK YOU NEED A LESSON!
BETTER TEACH IT FAST.
HUH--?
WUK


ARE YOU OKAY? THE OLD ROCK-IN-THE-BRIEF-CASE TRICK WAS ALL I COULD THINK OF AT THE MOMENT.
SURE. NO WESTERN ADVENTURE IS COMPLETE WITHOUT THE INDIANS ARRIVING AT THE LAST MOMENT TO SAVE YOU FROM THE CAVALRY!

HI, I'M SITTING BULL.
I DO NOT THINK SO.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: "HE DOESN'T LOOK 'SIOUX-ISH.'"
I DO NOT THINK SITTING BULL WAS A SIOUX.
NEVER MIND.

I'M CHESTER IRONEAGLE. I'M PROFESSOR JAMES' ATTORNEY.
I'M RACE BANNON. I'M PROFESSOR JAMES' GUNSLINGER.

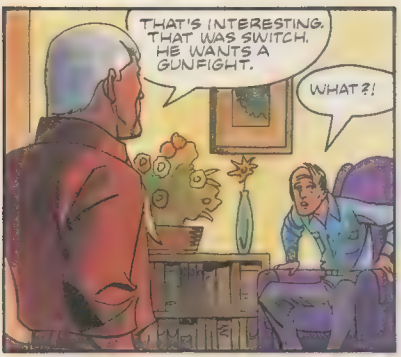

THESE ARE A LITTLE CRUSHED, BUT WE CAN VOTE THEM AT THE NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING--TWIST SWENSON'S TAIL!

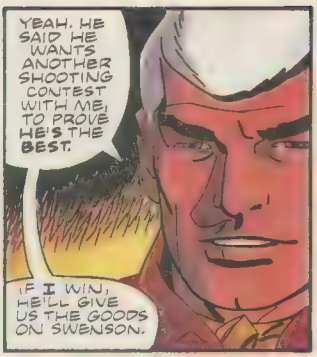

UH, RACE...? I THINK THEY'RE WAKING UP...

GOSH, FELLAS,.. THIS SURE IS A FINE RIFLE.
SCRAAACHH!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THEM?
I'M NOT SURE. WE COULD CALL THE LAW, BUT THE LOCALS WOULD PROBABLY LET THEM GO!
I GUESS WE'LL JUST HAVE TO KILL THEM.
OR STAKE THEM TO AN ANTHILL WITH HONEY ON THEIR FACES, UNTIL THE SUN SLOWLY BOILS ALL THE--
YAAAAAAAAAA
GEE, I WONDER IF IT WAS SOMETHING I SAID...?!

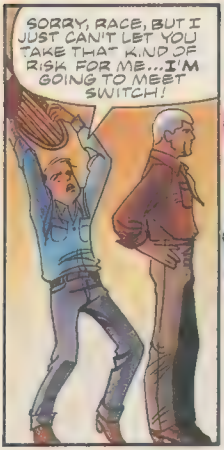
YOU'RE BUYING STOCK IN OLD WEST UNIVERSE?
TRYING. WE'VE GOT ENOUGH PROXIES NOW TO GO TO A BOARD MEETING AND RAISE A STINK ABOUT THE WAY SWENSON'S ACTING.
I'LL BET THESE ARE THE CAUSE OF YOUR PROBLEMS. SWENSON'S PROBABLY DECIDED YOU'RE FRONTING FOR A RIVAL CORPORATION, TRYING FOR A TAKEOVER.
DO YOU THINK SO?
I DON'T THINK SO. WE'RE OBVIOUSLY PRETTY SMALL POTATOES...
WELL, IF HE WAS THE ONE WHO STAGED THAT TRAIN ROBBERY, HE'S PLENTY SCARED OF SOMETHING! HMMM...
...IF YOU COLLECTED ENOUGH OF THESE, COULD YOU FORCE AN AUDIT?
IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS THAT... BUT, YES, WE COULD.
SUPPOSE SWENSON COULDN'T STAND ONE?
THAT HAS TO BE IT! WE'VE GOT HIM!
DON'T BE TOO HAPPY ABOUT THIS. WE'VE JUST GIVEN HIM A MOTIVE HE MIGHT BE WILLING TO KILL FOR!

AND SO, LATER THAT SAME DAY...
HE MADE FOOLS OF YOU! FOOLS! AND YOU SAY HE'S DISCOVERED WATER ON THAT LAND?
YES, SIR. A BUNCH OF IT.
WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING QUICKLY, BEFORE BANNON DESTROYS MY ENTIRE OPERATION!
BUT HE CAN'T BE BOUGHT OR SCARED. IF WE COULD JUST GET HIM OUT OF THE WAY UNTIL AFTER THE NEXT BOARD MEETING...
I BELIEVE A WAY HAS JUST PRESENTED ITSELF TO ME...
...THERE HAS TO BE A WAY. IF WE CAN GET SWENSON TO STRIKE AT US PREMATURELY...
BRRRING
TRUE WEST..THIS IS BANNON... OH... OH, I SEE... YES... YES, I'D BE WILLING... OKAY, I'LL BE THERE.
WELL, WELL, WELL...!


THAT'S INTERESTING. THAT WAS SWITCH. HE WANTS A GUNFIGHT.
WHAT?!


YEAH. HE SAID HE WANTS ANOTHER SHOOTING CONTEST WITH ME, TO PROVE HE'S THE BEST.
IF I WIN, HE'LL GIVE US THE GOODS ON SWENSON.

YOU KNOW IT'S A TRAP.
YEAH, BUT I THINK IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO TIP THEIR HAND.


SORRY, RACE, BUT I JUST CAN'T LET YOU TAKE THAT KIND OF RISK FOR ME...I'M GOING TO MEET SWITCH!

CRASCHHH

PROF...THAT SORT OF STUFF ONLY WORKS IN THE MOVIES. IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN BE MY BACK-UP... I'LL NEED ONE!

HE AGREED? HE'LL MEET YOU AT SUNDOWN?
HE AGREED. WHAT'LL REALLY HAPPEN? WE'LL ALL BE WAITING FOR HIM, AND SHOOT 'IM IN AMBUSH, OR WHAT?
NO, NO. HE'D SMELL A TRAP. YOU HAVE TO FACE HIM AND THEN, WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED...
WHAT?! NO WAY, MAN!
THAT GUY SHOOTS REAL BULLETS, AND HE MEANS IT! HE ALMOST KILLED ME LAST TIME.
GET YOURSELF ANOTHER PATSY. I QUIT!
NOT US, BOSS: WE'VE BEEN BEAT UP, KNOCKED OUT, NEAR TORTURED, AND HAD OUR HATS BLOWED AWAY!
YEAH. ME AN' SPIN JUST SIGNED ON FOR THE FREE INSURANCE!
COWARDS! SNIVELING RATS! I'LL TAKE ON BANNON MYSELF, THEN!
AND I'LL KILL HIM DEAD!

UH-OH, RACER OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS...
HELLO...? IS THAT YOU, JONNY? I CAN'T TALK LONG.
YOU'VE GOT TO WARN RACER... HE'S WALKING INTO A DEATH TRAP, AND--
WILD JIM...? WILD JIM! HELLO... HELLO...?
PROFESSOR JAMES...?
RACE...?
JONNY! YOU FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO WILD JIM!
RIGHT! AND YOU FOLLOW RACE AN' THE PROFESSOR!
BE CAREFUL!

HMMM...THOSE MASKS WOULD HANG THE TRAIN JOB AROUND SWENSONI'S NECK...
ASSUMING I GET OUT OF THIS...
Dum... de...dum...of Virginia...on the trail of the Lonesome Pine.
THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO SERENADE EXCEPT YOU AND ME.
JADE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
LIBERATING A DUPLICATE SET OF BOOKS THAT SWENSON KEEPS.
I THINK BOTH THE S.E.C. AND THE I.R.S. WILL BE VERY INTERESTED.
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE... AS A DOUBLE-AGENT FOR THEM?
NOT EXACTLY...
...A COUPLE OF SWENSONI'S RIVALS ARE PAYING ME... WHICH IS WHY I CAN'T LET YOU GO FREE.
NOTHING PERSONAL.
BUT HERE'S A CANDLE. YOU CAN BURN YOUR WAY FREE IN THE BEST HEROIC TRADITION!
SHE COULD AT LEAST HAVE LIT IT!
SLAM!

MAYBE I CAN LIGHT IT FOR YOU.
JONNY! JUST GET THESE ROPES OFF ME, KID!
OKAY, AND I BROUGHT BIG BOY FOR YOU TO RIDE.
JUST BE CAREFUL- HE'S SO PRETTY WILD.
DON'T WORRY. HE'LL HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING UP WITH ME!
I... TAKE ONE OF THESE FOR EVIDENCE. IT'S WHAT I JOINED THIS TURKEY-SHOOT TO FIND.
I JUST HOPE RACE HASN'T BIT OFF MORE'N HE CAN CHEW.

I HOPE THE PROF WILL BE ALL RIGHT, BACK WHERE I LEFT HIM STANDING GUARD.
THERE'S NO ONE HERE. I WONDER IF IT WAS SOME KIND OF TRICK...?
THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE IN PLAN, BANNON! YOU'LL DEAL WITH ME NOW!
THEY SAY WHAT MATTERS IN A GUNFIGHT ISN'T HOW GOOD YOU ARE, BUT HOW LITTLE YOU CARE ABOUT DYING!

RATTL-
RATTL-
ATTL
=Gasp!= A S-SNAKE... RATTLER!
RATTL-
RATTL-
ATTL
DON'T MOVE.
YOU C-CAN SHOOT IT... RIGHT...?
RATTL-
RATTL-
ATTL
I'M...NOT SURE...ANY MOVEMENT...COULD SET IT...OFF...
AND I DON'T KNOW IF I'M AS FAST AS A STRIKING SNAKE.
RATTL-RATTL-
ATTL
TALK ABOUT "CODE OF THE WEST"! I'M ABOUT TO GET KILLED FOR A MAN WHO WAS READY TO SHOOT ME!

POMK
YOU SHOULD NOT PLAY WITH SNAKES IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM.
THEY ARE MOST DANGEROUS.
DO YOU STILL WANT TO FIGHT?
Phewww! I DON'T THINK I'M UP TO IT.
BLAST YOU, BANNON! I CAN'T KILL A MAN WHO'S JUST SAVED MY LIFE!
MAYBE YOU DON'T HAVE TO. WE AREN'T SABOTAGING YOUR COMPANY. MAYBE WE COULD COMPROMISE HERE...
YOU'RE BOTH DEAD...!

YOU HOO'MIL'ATED ME... BOTH OF YOU! MADE ME LOOK STUPID! CALLED ME COWARD! TARNISH' MY LEGEND!
NOW YOU DIE!
YAAAAAA! WHOA, DAMN YOU! WHOA!
I SAID... WHHOOAAAAAAA
WHHUMP
WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?

So anyway, Dad, everything turned out okay... Well, except for Mr. Swenson, who has to talk to some congressmen for a while. And because of the stock he has, Prof. James is now a director of Old West Universe. He calls it "One of the ironies of the West."

Race says to tell you we'll be staying another [illegible], so we [illegible] you'll understand. Talk to you soon.

Jonny

The End

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I'M SO CLOSE! IT MUST WORK. IT MUST!
I MUST INCREASE THE POWER UNITS...MORE ON ALPHA FORCE...MORE ON BETA FORCE...
MOLECULAR ENERGY HAS BODY! IT CAN BE CONTROLLED...!
KRAASSSCHHH!

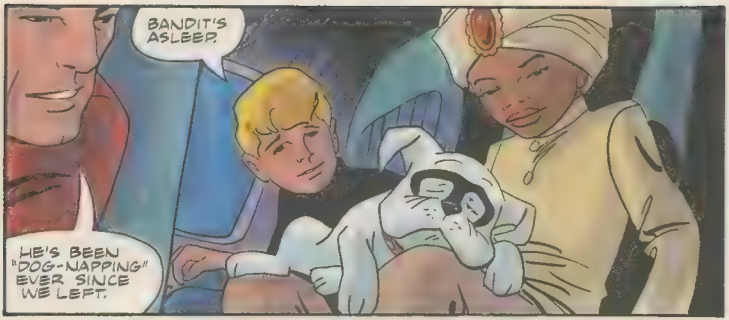
UHHHHHHH...
MMBREEE MMBREEEE
THAT NOISE...
FRRUFFF
ERRUFFF
FRRUFF
FRUUFF
SCRAUNNCH!!
WHAT HAVE I CREATED?

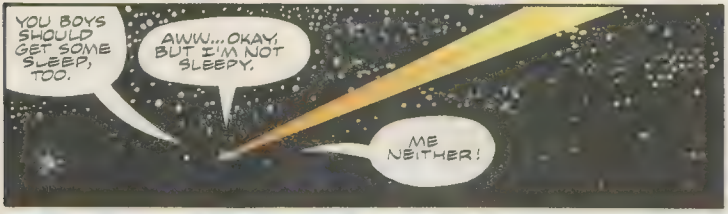
THE INVISIBLE MONSTER
RADIO MESSAGE, DOC--FROM CAPE ISLAND.
TELEPLAY ADAPTATION: WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS
ART: MARC HEMPEL, MARK WHEATLEY, AND KATHRYN MAYER
MEMORIES: DIANA SCHUTZ
CAPE ISLAND? THAT WOULD BE ISAIAH NORMAN.
ISN'T HE THE ONE WHO'S EXPERIMENTING WITH MOLECULAR ENERGY?
RIGHT YOU ARE.
QUEST HERE.
BENTON! YOU MUST HELP ME! IT'S MONSTROUS BEYOND BELIEF!

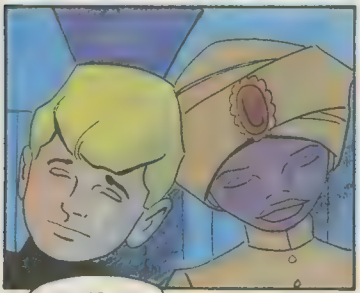
ISAIAH... WHAT--?
NO... NO... IT'S COMING BACK! YAAAAAA!
ISAIAH...ISAIAH!
THE LINE'S DEAD.
JONNY! HARJI! PACK THE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES... AND HURRY!
IN THE NEW PLANE, DAD?
THAT'S RIGHT, SON.
VERTOL EXPERIMENTAL LANDING FIELD
GOV'T RESEARCH PROJECT

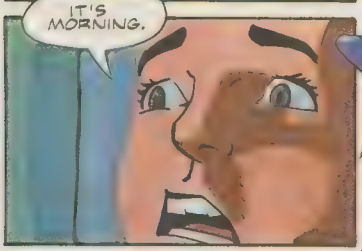
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
<THAT NOISE... WHAT IS IT?>
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
<IS IT DAEMONS? OR... DHASSA? IS THAT YOU, DHASSA?>
<DHASSA! IF THIS IS ONE OF YOUR PRACTICAL JOKES...!>
MBRREEE

SOME TAKEOFF, HUH, HADJI?
JUST LIKE AN ELEVATOR!
WE'LL BE AT CAPE ISLAND BY MORNING.
READY FOR ENGINE SWITCH-OVER, DOC.
FRROOOSH
COULD EXPERIMENTING WITH THIS MOLECULAR ENERGY BE DANGEROUS, DOC?
IT'S POSSIBLE, OF COURSE...
...I JUST DON'T KNOW.


BANDIT'S ASLEEP.
HE'S BEEN "DOG-NAPPING" EVER SINCE WE LEFT.

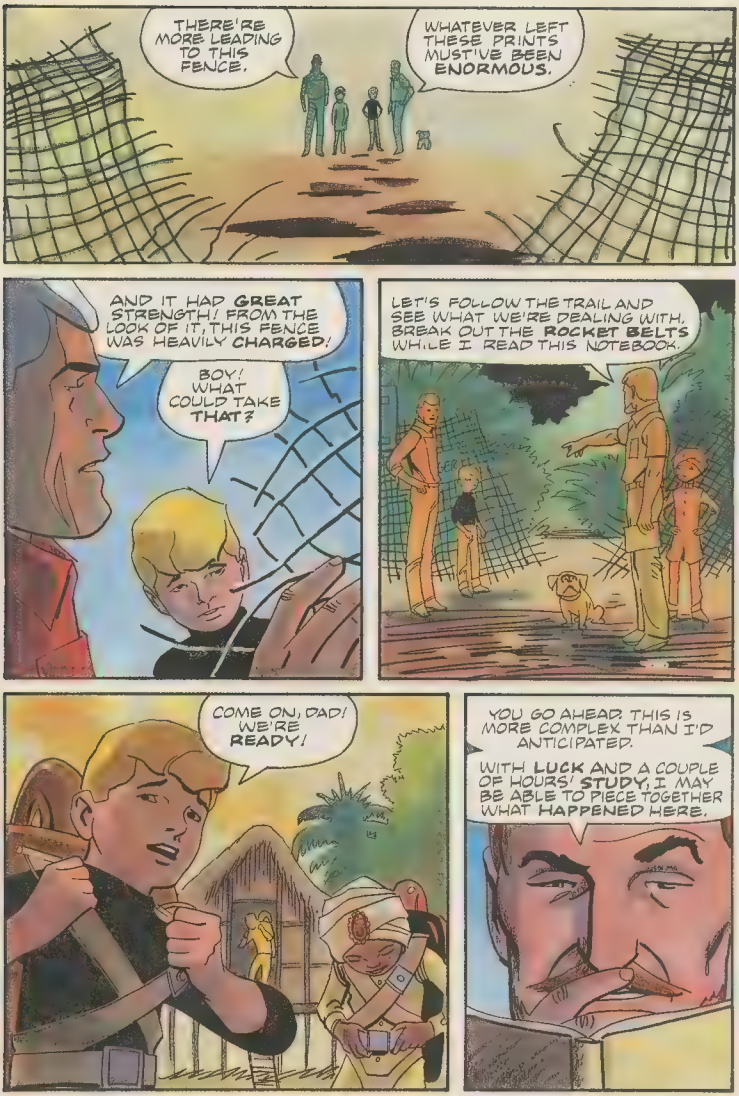

YOU BOYS SHOULD GET SOME SLEEP, TOO.
AWW... OKAY, BUT I'M NOT SLEEPY.
ME NEITHER!

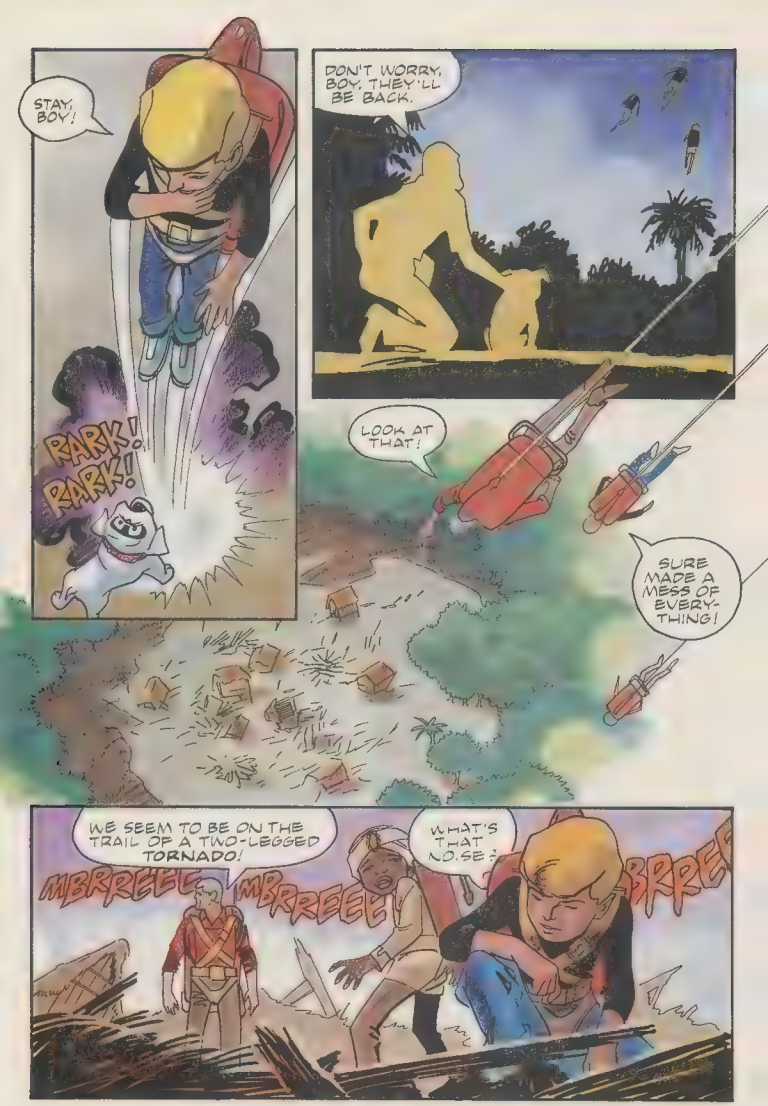



IT'S MORNING.

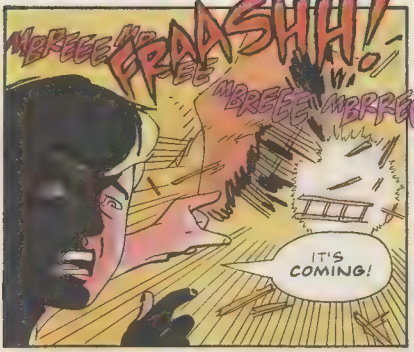
AND THERE'S CAPE ISLAND, BOYS.
ALREADY? I HARDLY CLOSED MY EYES.
ME NEITHER.

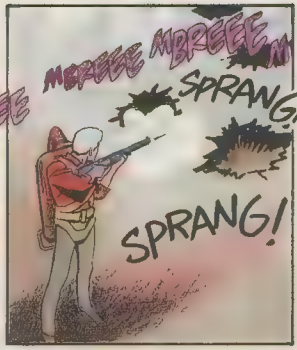
THAT'S THE WESTERN TIP OF THE ISLAND. ISAIAH'S LAB SHOULD BE OVER THE JUNGLE. KEEP AN EYE OUT.
LOOK, DAD! THERE IT IS!
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN BOMBED.
THIS IS PROFESSOR NORMAN'S NOTEBOOK. PERHAPS IT WILL TELL US ABOUT HIS LATEST EXPERIMENT.
IT'S SO QUIET. THERE ARE NO BIRDS OR...
OVER HERE, DAD! THIS IS A REAL CLUE!
I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE IT!

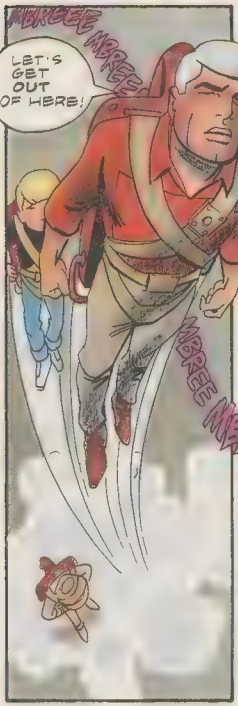

THERE'RE MORE LEADING TO THIS FENCE.
WHATEVER LEFT THESE PRINTS MUST'VE BEEN ENORMOUS.
AND IT HAD GREAT STRENGTH! FROM THE LOOK OF IT, THIS FENCE WAS HEAVILY CHARGED!
BOY! WHAT COULD TAKE THAT?
LET'S FOLLOW THE TRAIL AND SEE WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH. BREAK OUT THE ROCKET BELTS WHILE I READ THIS NOTEBOOK.
COME ON, DAD! WE'RE READY!
YOU GO AHEAD. THIS IS MORE COMPLEX THAN I'D ANTICIPATED.
WITH LUCK AND A COUPLE OF HOURS' STUDY, I MAY BE ABLE TO PIECE TOGETHER WHAT HAPPENED HERE.

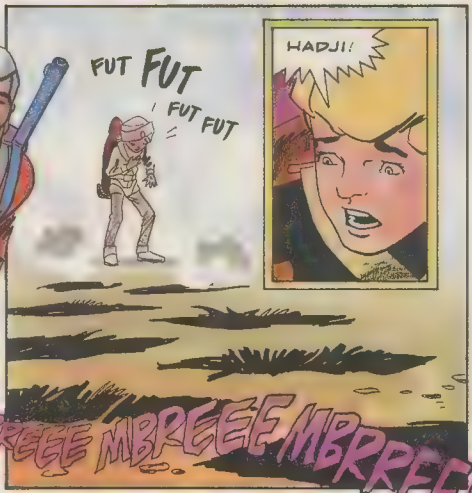

STAY, BOY!
RARK! RARK!
DON'T WORRY, BOY. THEY'LL BE BACK.
LOOK AT THAT!
SURE MADE A MESS OF EVERY-THING!
WE SEEM TO BE ON THE TRAIL OF A TWO-LEGGED TORNADO!
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
BRREE

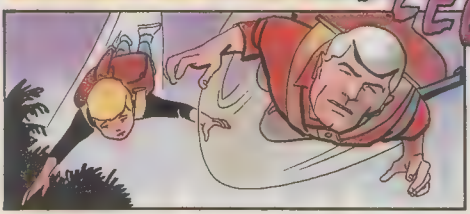
PERHAPS IT IS OUR FRIEND!
I DON'T NEED FRIENDS LIKE THAT!
LET'S GO "UPSTAIRS." I'LL FEEL SAFER.
RACE, WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE TO YOU?
I...DON'T KNOW. WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S HEADING FOR THE BEACH.
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!
IT'S INVISIBLE!
WE'VE GOT TO WARN THE VILLAGE!
HELLO? HELLOOO?
IT'S DESERTED!

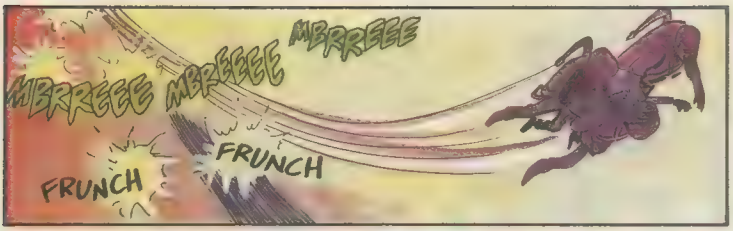

MBREEE MBREEE
FRAASHH!
MBREEE MBRREEE
IT'S COMING!

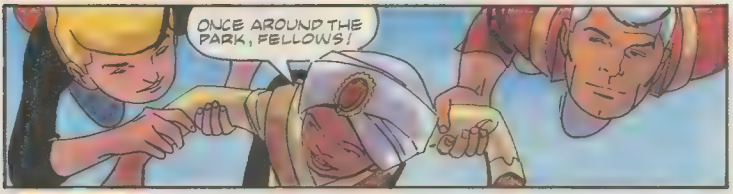

MBREEE MBREEE
SPRANG!
SPRANG!

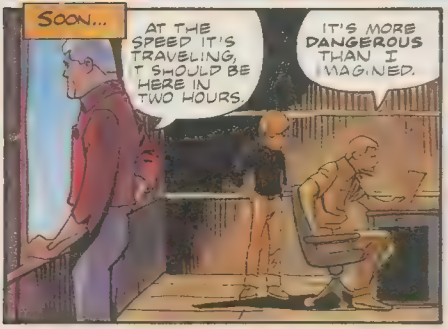

MBREEE MBREE
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
MBREEE MBREEE MBREEE


FUT FUT
FUT FUT
HADJI!
MBREEE MBREEE MBREEE MBRREEE



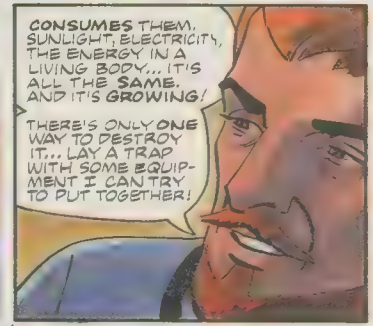

MBRREEE
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
FRUNCH
FRUNCH


ONCE AROUND THE PARK, FELLOWS!


SOON...
AT THE SPEED IT'S TRAVELING, IT SHOULD BE HERE IN TWO HOURS.
IT'S MORE DANGEROUS THAN I IMAGINED.

I'VE FINISHED READING ISAIAH'S NOTES, AND I THINK I KNOW WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH.
WE'LL HAVE TO DESTROY IT.
WHY?

ISAIAH WAS EXPERIMENTING WITH MOLECULAR ENERGY, AND IT GOT AWAY FROM HIM. A MASS OF ENERGY HAS COME TO LIFE AND IS FEEDING ON MORE ENERGY.
I THINK IT DESTROYED HIM.
CAN IT BAT PEOPLE?


CONSUMES THEM, SUNLIGHT, ELECTRICITY, THE ENERGY IN A LIVING BODY... IT'S ALL THE SAME. AND IT'S GROWING!
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DESTROY IT... LAY A TRAP WITH SOME EQUIPMENT I CAN TRY TO PUT TOGETHER!

BUT FIRST WE HAVE TO MAKE IT VISIBLE...
CAN'T WE PAINT IT?
HMMM...THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA, SON.
RACE, PULL THOSE PLASTIC SACKS OUT OF THE PLANE, AND FILL THEM WITH PAINT FROM THAT UTILITY SHED IN BACK.
AND, BOYS, GET THOSE BELTS CHECKED OUT.
YES, SIR.
ESPECIALLY YOU, HADJI!
WHAT A MESS!
LET'S FOLLOW IT!
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S HEADING BACK TOWARD THE LAB.
NO DOUBT FOR ELECTRICITY, TO SUSTAIN ITS POWER THROUGH THE NIGHT.
IF ONLY IT WOULD STOP...
LOOKS LIKE YOU GET YOUR WISH, DOC! RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THAT THING!

I MIXED THE PAINT WITH PHOSPHORESCENT DYES.
DON'T WASTE YOUR SHOTS, ANYONE!
GERONIMO!
SPLOORCH
SPLOOCH
SPLATT
SPLATCHH
MBRREE?
MBRREEE
MBRREE
MBRREE
MBRREE
MBRREE
MBREE

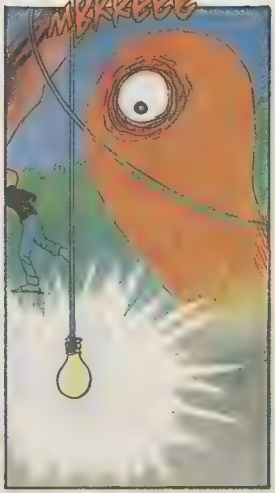
GOOD GOD!
IT'S MOVING AGAIN!
BACK TO THE LAB. WE HAVE A TRAP TO SET!
IT HAD BETTER BE A PRETTY BIG TRAP! THAT'S A PRETTY BIG MONSTER!
HELP ME WITH THIS WIRE, WILL YOU, JONNY?
SURE.
ARE WE ABOUT DONE HERE, RACE?
YEAH--AS SOON AS THESE LIGHTS ARE CONNECTED AND YOUR DAD GETS BACK.

IT'S HEADING FOR THE CAVE. I'D BETTER GET OVER THERE PRONTO!
I HOPE THIS WORKS!
IT'D BETTER WORK! I'M THE BAIT!
WHY, DAD? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
SOMEONE HAS TO LURE IT HERE. LET'S GO TO THE UTILITY SHED. I'LL EXPLAIN...
...I'VE RIGGED UP A SERIES OF LIGHTS TO ATTRACT IT. AS THE SUN GOES DOWN, IT WILL BE LOOKING FOR OTHER SOURCES OF ENERGY.
WHAT ABOUT THAT EQUIPMENT IN THE CAVE?
IF I CAN LURE IT THERE, I PLAN TO REVERSE THE PROCESS BY WHICH IT WAS CREATED.

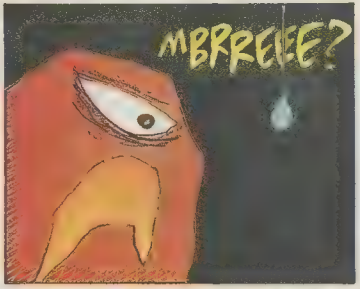
I THINK I'LL JUST KEEP MY FINGERS CROSSED.
THE CREATURE IS COMING, DOCTOR.
RIGHT ON SCHEDULE. WHEN IT GETS HERE, THROW SWITCH #1. THEN, WHEN IT GETS TO THAT LIGHT, TURN IT OFF AND HIT SWITCH #2. THAT WILL TURN ON THE LIGHT BY THE CAVE ENTRANCE.
I'LL TURN THAT ONE OFF.
I'LL BRING IT INSIDE WITH THIS FLASHLIGHT. THEN, WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL, THROW THE MAIN SWITCH!
YOU GOT IT!
BE CAREFUL!
GOOD LUCK!
BANDIT! COME BACK!
YARP
YARP

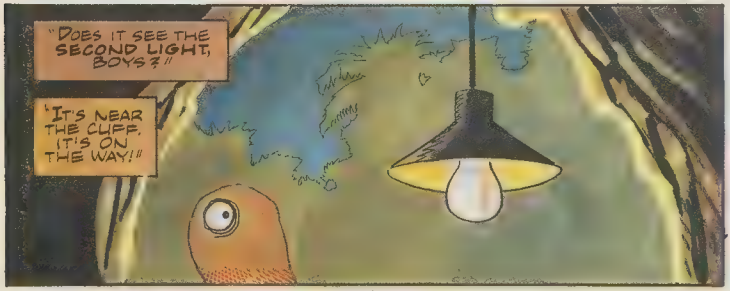
BANDIT, NO, NO... STAY! STAY!
BANDIT!
JONNY! NO!
YARP! YARP!
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
MBRREEE
YARP!
YIIIII!

RACE, IT'S COMING! TURN ON THE FIRST LIGHT!


MBRREEE

MBRREE
MBRREEE


MBRREEE?


"DOES IT SEE THE SECOND LIGHT, BOYS?"
"IT'S NEAR THE CLIFF. IT'S ON THE WAY!"

DOC... RACE HERE...
I SEE IT, RACE.
IT'S REACHED THE ENTRANCE LIGHT. I'M TURNING IT OFF...NOW.
THAT DID IT! HERE GOES...!
RACE, IT SEES THE LIGHT! I'VE GOT IT!
HERE, MONSTER!
THAT'S A NIIIIICE MONSTER...
NOW, RACE!

MBRREEE
MBRREEE

DOC, DOC... ARE YOU OKAY?
THE MONSTER'S GONE... IT'S FINISHED!
HURRAY!
WHAT A RELIEF!
OH, MAN! AM I GLAD THAT'S OVER!

THERE! THAT'S THE LAST OF THE REFERENCE PHOTOS. FOR ONCE I'M REALLY GLAD TO LEAVE!
ME, TOO. WHERE ARE THE BOYS?
HI, BANDIT. READY TO GO, BOYS?
IN A SECOND, RACE.
WE'RE TRAINING BANDIT TO BE AFRAID OF MONSTERS!
BOOGA-BOOGA, BANDIT!
YARP! YARP!
BOOGA... YIIIPE!
HA-HA-HA! I SEE YOU'VE GOT HIM TERRIFIED!
COME ON, MONSTERS! LET'S GO HOME.

I'LL MAKE A FULL REPORT WHEN WE GET BACK. I OWE HIM THAT MUCH.
WILL PROFESSOR NORMAN'S LOSS BE A SERIOUS SETBACK TO RESEARCH INTO MOLECULAR ENERGY?
YES, I'M AFRAID IT WILL.
IT'S A COLD COMFORT, BUT WHAT WE LEARN FROM ANY SETBACK HELPS SCIENCE TO MOVE FORWARD.
YAWWWN! IT MUST BE PAST MIDNIGHT!
YEAH, BUT WE'RE ALMOST DONE!
BOY, THANKS FOR STAYING UP WITH US, KATHY! WE WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH THIS WITHOUT YOU.
YOU'RE A PAL, KATHY!
THE END

BENTON!

SOCIAL WORK

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NOW, LOOK, KATHY--CAN'T THIS WAIT? THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT.
RIGHT. WHAT IS IT THIS TIME, BENTON? SEVEN SEISMIC SPIDERS IN SWAZILAND? BARREL-SHAPED BASILISK BOMBS IN BORNEO? IT'S ALWAYS SOMETHING!
OUR LIVES ARE IMPORTANT, TOO.
I PROMISED THE WALDROOP CORPORATION I'D TRY TO FIX THIS COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR THEM. IT'S INTERMITTENTLY DAMAGING DATA.
THE MODEL WORKS PERFECTLY!
YOU EXPECT THINGS TO BE SO COMPLEX. IT'S PROBABLY SOMETHING SIMPLE LIKE A RACCOON LOST IN THE WORKS OR--
OH, DON'T BE STUPID, KATHY. IF IT WERE THAT, I'D...
UH, WAIT, KATHY. I DIDN'T MEAN "STUPID" EXACTLY. I JUST... I...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, BENTON. I HAVE TO GET TO WORK ANYWAY.

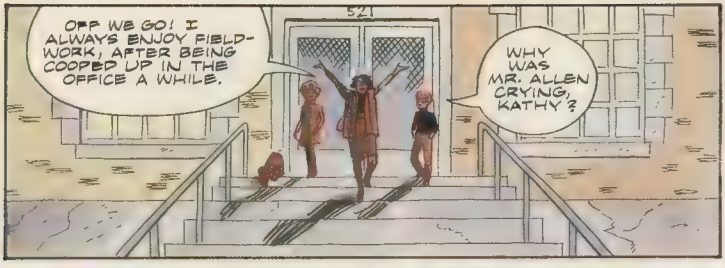
STUPID... STUPID! WHY, I SHOULD'VE SAID...
EGBERT, ETHELWULF, ETHELBERT, ETHELBALD, ETHELRED I, ALFRED THE--
NO, JONNY. IT IS ETHELBALD, THEN ETHELBERT.
OKAY... ALFRED THE GREAT, EDWARD I THE ELDER, ATHELSTAN, EDMUND I, EDWIG, EDRED, EDGAR, EDWARD II THE MARTYR, ETHELRED II THE UNREAD...
EDRED, THEN EDWIG.
WE'LL NEVER LEARN THIS STUFF! WE'RE GONNA FRY ON THIS TEST!
YOU WERE THE ONE WHO SAID WE COULD WATCH ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK AND STUDY AT THE SAME TIME!
YOU DIDN'T ARGUE MUCH. 'SIDES, HADJI, I DON'T THINK ANYBODY CAN LEARN THIS STUFF.
IT'S THE MOST BORING STUFF IN THE WORLD!
JONNY, LOOK!
HEY, GUYS, READY FOR THE TEST?
BOY, ONCE YOU LEARN THIS, WILL WE HAVE FUN!
THE WHOLE PAGEANT OF ENGLISH HISTORY WILL OPEN UP BEFORE YOU!
WE'RE DEAD!

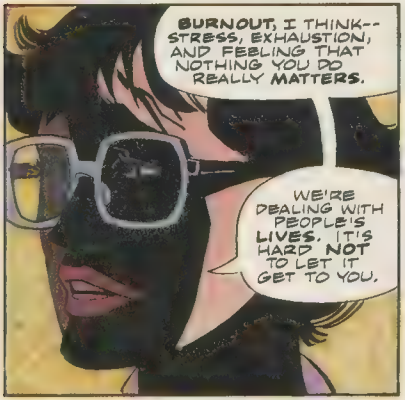
ISN'T THIS FUN? I LOVED THIS STUFF WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL.
IT WAS ALL I WAS REALLY GOOD AT.
AFTER THIS, WE'LL LEARN WHO THEY MARRIED, THE DATES THEY RULED, AND THE--
UH, RACE, CAN I TALK TO YOU?
I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TAKE THE BOYS ON MY ROUNDS, SO THEY CAN LEARN WHAT A SOCIAL WORKER REALLY DOES. AND TODAY WOULD BE SO GOOD FOR ME.
WELL...
...WE WERE GOING TO STUDY THESE KINGS...
GOSH, RACE! SOCIAL WORK!
I BET WE COULD LEARN A LOT FROM THAT, TOO!
WELL, I GUESS IT WOULD BE EDUCATIONAL. SURE, GO AHEAD.
?
WE'RE SAVED! NO MORE KINGS OF ENGLAND!
DON'T CHEER TOO FAST, HADJI.

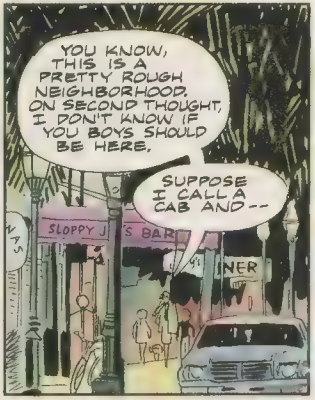
I THINK WE'VE JUST AGREED TO DO THE ONE THING EVEN MORE BORING THAN THE KINGS OF ENGLAND!
BOYS, THIS IS WHERE I WORK.
GOSH, IT SURE LOOKS... OLD.
HI, DIANE. WHAT'S HAPPENING?
GLAD TO SEE YOU, GIRL. LIFE IS TERRIBLE TODAY.
BOSS, WHERE'S CHAUVIN AND BROWN? AND DENICE?
FLU EPIDEMIC. LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE MORE WORK TODAY.
OH?
OUT
OH-OH.
IN

YES...YES...I UNDERSTAND, OF COURSE, BUT...TODAY? BUT I CAN... BUT... BUT...
BLAST!
CLIK!
TROUBLE, BOSS-MAN?
OH, WALDROOP CORPORATION HAS AN IMPORTANT PROJECT COMING UP. THEY'RE DESPERATE TO GET ON-LINE.
OF COURSE, IT IS OUT OF THE WAY, AND THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO COME...
I'LL GET THE HOVERCRAFT WARMED UP.
IT'S ONLY FORTY MILES, AND I HAVEN'T VISITED A SICK COMPUTER LATELY.
THANKS, PAL.
SAY, DOC...DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD WAIT AND PUT THE TOP ON THIS THING?
OH, I DON'T THINK IT'S WORTH THE BOTHER. IT DOESN'T REALLY LOOK LIKE RAIN...

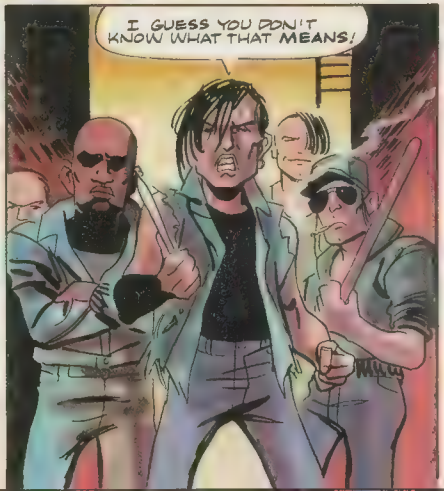
JONNY, GIVE THESE TO RICK ALLEN, WILL YOU? THEN WE'LL BE READY TO GO.
OKAY.
NOW, LOOK--IT'S OBVIOUS SHE NEEDS THE OPERATION. SHE NEEDS IT DESPERATELY...
...AND WE'VE PROVED NEED. I DON'T KNOW...
WE'VE SENT THOSE PAPERS. WE'VE SENT THEM THREE TIMES! IF THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE YOU NEED...!
UH, MR. ALLEN... KATHY SAYS YOU WANTED TO SEE THESE.
WHAT? OH, YEAH. THANKS...
WHERE WAS I? YOU'VE GOT THE AE-12 AND AE-15. I DON'T... I DON'T...
SOB
SOB


OFF WE GO! I ALWAYS ENJOY FIELD-WORK, AFTER BEING COOPED UP IN THE OFFICE A WHILE.
WHY WAS MR. ALLEN CRYING, KATHY?


BURNOUT, I THINK--STRESS, EXHAUSTION, AND FEELING THAT NOTHING YOU DO REALLY MATTERS.
WE'RE DEALING WITH PEOPLE'S LIVES. IT'S HARD NOT TO LET IT GET TO YOU.

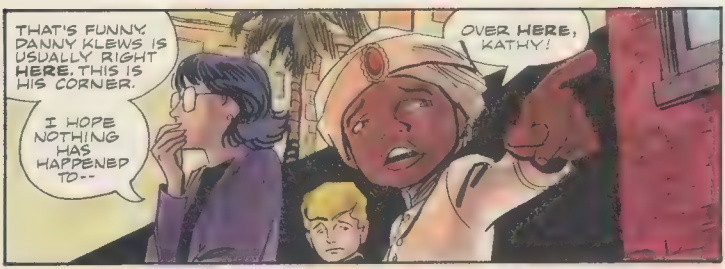

YOU KNOW, THIS IS A PRETTY ROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD. ON SECOND THOUGHT, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU BOYS SHOULD BE HERE.
SUPPOSE I CALL A CAB AND--
SLOPPY J'S BAR
NER

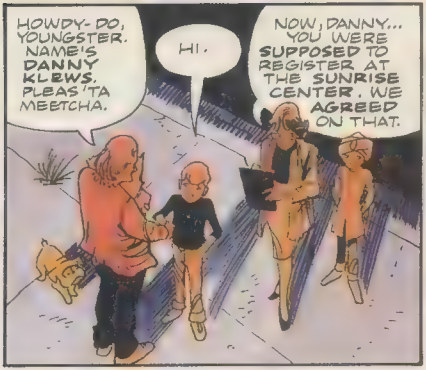
HEY, LOOK WHAT'S HERE. YOU PEOPLE WANT TROUBLE? THIS IS STINGER TURF!

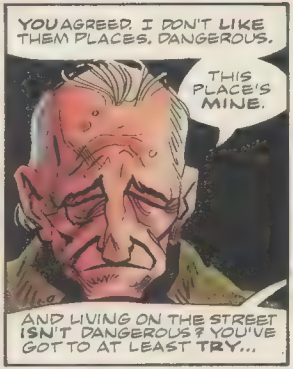

I GUESS YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!

SIM... SIM...
...SALABIM!
THEN AGAIN, MAYBE THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
...EXCEPT THE WEATHER. IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S REALLY STORMING TO THE SOUTH.

RRUUMMBBBBLLLLKRAK!
AUTHORIZED PARKING ONLY
VIOLATORS WILL BE TOWED AT OWNERS EXPENSE
DOC QUEST! YOU GOT HERE! GREAT!
UH...
...WANNA PIZZA?
I CAN'T TOUCH ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS IN THIS CONDITION.
GET ME A TOWEL, THE SPECS, AND A DRY TECHNICIAN!
NOW!


THAT'S FUNNY. DANNY KLEWS IS USUALLY RIGHT HERE. THIS IS HIS CORNER.
I HOPE NOTHING HAS HAPPENED TO--
OVER HERE, KATHY!


HOWDY-DO, YOUNGSTER. NAME'S DANNY KLEWS. PLEAS'TA MEETCHA.
HI.
NOW, DANNY... YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO REGISTER AT THE SUNRISE CENTER. WE AGREED ON THAT.


YOU AGREED. I DON'T LIKE THEM PLACES. DANGEROUS.
THIS PLACE'S MINE.
AND LIVING ON THE STREET ISN'T DANGEROUS? YOU'VE GOT TO AT LEAST TRY...

STREET'S H'OKAY IF Y'KNOW WHAT Y'R DOIN'. THEY JUS' THROW'D OUT A BUNCHA FRUIT AT THE GROCERY.
HAVE A BANANA.

UM...THANKS, ANYWAY. BUT DON'T YOU WANT A ROOM? A HOME? A FAMILY?

HAD 'EM. LOST 'EM. AIN'T WORTH THE AGGERVATION!
HECK, I USETA BUILD HOMES ONCE.

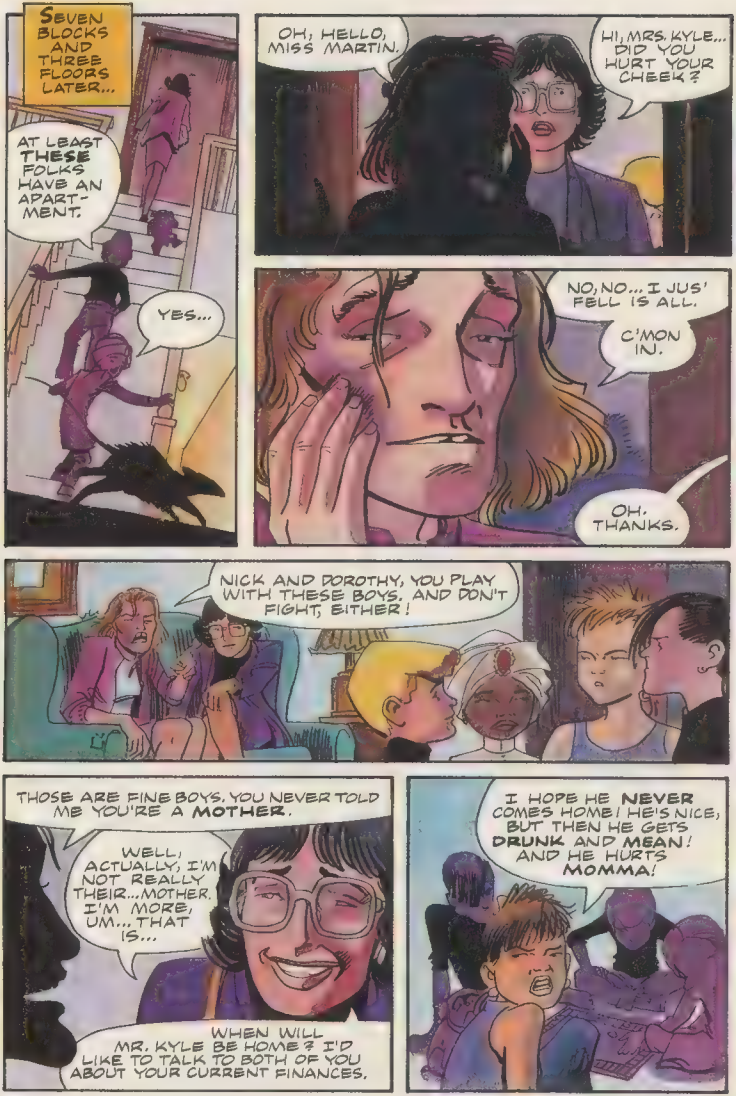
WAIT A SECOND... YOU WERE A CARPENTER?
WASN'T ALWAYS TRASH, WAS A FINISH CARPENTER, TILL THE HOUSING MARKET DRIED UP.
I...I DIDN'T MEAN...OF COURSE YOU'RE NOT TRASH...
MY BUSINESS DIED... THEN MY WIFE DIED...
I HAD A HOUSE... THEN I GOT A 'PARTMENT...THEN I GOT A ROOM... THEN SOMEBODY NEEDED THE ROOM.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY RELATIVES?
GOT A DAUGHTER OUT WEST, SHE'S GOTTA JOB, DON' NEED ME, AN' I DON' GET ALONG WITH MY SON-IN-LAW.
I DRUTHER BE HERE.
OH.
7844

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR HIM. MAYBE THE CARPENTRY IS AN OPTION...
...SO COULD YOU RUN A CHECK ON AN ALICE CRAMER, MAIDEN NAME KLEWS? OH, AND, PATTY...? CHECK WITH JEFF AND SEE IF HE COULD USE A CARPENTER ON THOSE APARTMENTS HE'S RE-HABBING. THANKS.
HMMM. MRS. SOPHIE HOLLY. SHE'S NOT ONE OF MY REGULAR CLIENTS... IT SAYS SHE'S LIVED HERE MORE THAN 40 YEARS.
MRS. HOLLY? I'M KATHY MARTIN FROM PROTECTIVE SERVICES. RICK ALLEN ISN'T FEELING VERY WELL TODAY, SO I'M LOOKING IN ON SOME OF HIS CLIENTS.
COME IN, DEAR. I HAVE SOME COOKIES BAKING. YOUR BOYS WILL LOVE THEM!
THEY AREN'T REALLY MY...
WELL, I NOTICE YOUR LAWN COULD USE A LITTLE WORK. MAYBE I COULD ARRANGE SOMETHING.
OH, FRANK TAKES CARE OF THE YARD WORK. YOU AREN'T GOING TO MAKE US MOVE, ARE YOU?
I COULDN'T BEAR THAT.
THAT'S WHY WE CAME HERE, TO HELP YOU, SO THAT WON'T--
OH, GOOD...BECAUSE FRANK WANTS TO HANG A BIG FLAG OUT FRONT WHEN THE BOYS COME HOME FROM KOREA!

WELL, I... KOREA?
OH, YES. FRANK SAYS THE WAR WILL BE OVER BY CHRISTMAS!
BUT, MRS. HOLLY, YOUR RECORDS SAY YOUR HUSBAND HAS BEEN DEAD FOR--
OH, NO! IN FACT, IT'S ALMOST 5 O'CLOCK. HE SHOULD BE HOME SOON.
SNIF SNIF
IT'S NOT EVEN 12 O'CLOCK YET, MRS. HOLLY.
OF COURSE IT IS. MY SISTER ALWAYS CALLS ME JUST BEFORE 5:00...
JONNY... DO YOU SMELL SOMETHING?
GAS! IT SMELLS LIKE GAS!
THE OVEN IS TURNED ON!
...OR WAS THAT LAST WEEK SHE CALLED?
I CAN'T GET THE WINDOW OPEN!
I DO NOT FEEL WELL. CANNOT BREATHE!
JONNY! HADJI! WHAT--?
NOW, WHAT ARE YOU SCAMPS UP TO?

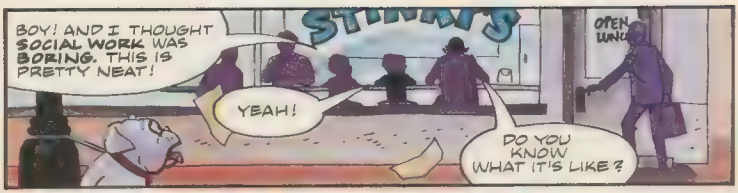
IT...UHHH... WON'T MOVE!
HSSSSSS
THEN DON'T BOTHER ABOUT IT, DEAR. I'LL HAVE FRANK TAKE CARE OF IT WHEN HE GETS HOME.
IT'S PAINTED SHUT! IF THERE'S A SPARK IN HERE...!
PUSH! PUSH!
SRRRK
KLONK
I'LL TURN OFF THE OVEN...
...THERE'S NOTHING IN HERE!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
THAT WASN'T SO BAD, NOW WAS IT?
LET'S ALL HAVE MILK AND COOKIES.

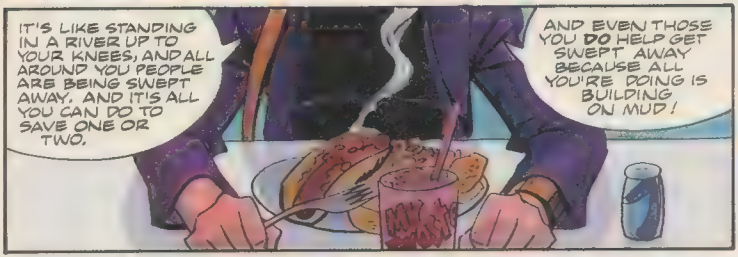
LOOK, ALL I'M TRYING TO SAY IS, SHE SHOULDN'T BE ALONE... SHE NEEDS LOOKING AFTER.
SHE HAS BEEN TESTED. HER SCORES WERE IN THE ACCEPTABLE RANGES.
SHE THINKS IT'S 1953! SHE LEFT THE GAS ON!
TRUE. BUT WE HAVE TO SHOW A PATTERN OF INSTABILITY!
RIGHT NOW SHE CAN'T BE LEFT ALONE. SHE IS GOING TO DIE IF SOMEBODY DOESN'T DO SOMETHING!
LET'S NOT GET HYSTERICAL. WE JUST HAVE TO COVER OURSELVES ON THIS ONE.
YOU KNOW HOW THE MEDIA WILL PICNIC ON US IF WE GUESS WRONG.
THEY LOVE TO MAKE US THE BAD GUYS!
THEN MAKE ME THE BAD GUY. JUST DO SOMETHING!
WE'LL LOOK INTO IT.
THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN.
CLIK
DRONE.

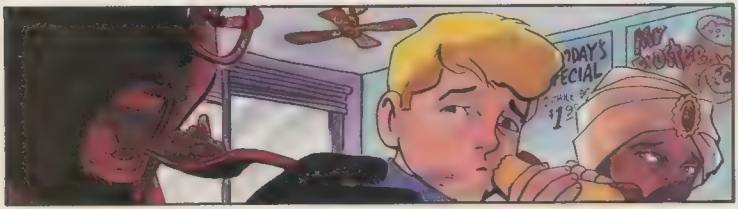

SEVEN BLOCKS AND THREE FLOORS LATER...
AT LEAST THESE FOLKS HAVE AN APARTMENT.
YES...
OH, HELLO, MISS MARTIN.
HI, MRS. KYLE... DID YOU HURT YOUR CHEEK?
NO, NO... I JUS' FELL IS ALL.
C'MON IN.
OH. THANKS.
NICK AND DOROTHY, YOU PLAY WITH THESE BOYS. AND DON'T FIGHT, EITHER!
THOSE ARE FINE BOYS. YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOU'RE A MOTHER.
WELL, ACTUALLY, I'M NOT REALLY THEIR... MOTHER. I'M MORE, UM... THAT IS...
WHEN WILL MR. KYLE BE HOME? I'D LIKE TO TALK TO BOTH OF YOU ABOUT YOUR CURRENT FINANCES.
I HOPE HE NEVER COMES HOME! HE'S NICE, BUT THEN HE GETS DRUNK AND MEAN! AND HE HURTS MOMMA!

NO, NO...THAT'S NOT RIGHT. HE DIDN'T MEAN IT!
CRA SH!
I HEAR YOU LYIN' 'BOUT ME!
SEE? I GOT ME A GUN! NOW Y'LL RESPEC' ME! EVER'-BODY RESPEC' ME! DON' NEED A STOOPID JOB T'GET A GUN!
MR. KYLE, PUT THAT AWAY. YOU DON'T NEED THAT.
LEMME BY! NOBODY STANDS BETWEEN ME 'N' M' WIFE!
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SHOOT ME THEN, BECAUSE THERE IS NO WAY YOU ARE GETTING BY ME WITH THAT.
SHOOT. IT WAS JUS' A JOKE ANYHOW.

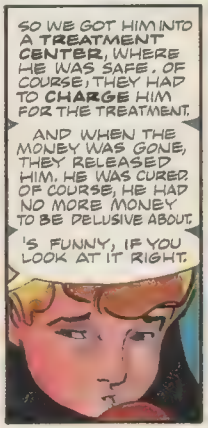
JUS' A JOKE-- A STOOPID JOKE...
MR. KYLE... NO!
BLAM!
LATER...
KATHY? THEY SAY HE'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT. WHEN YOU GRABBED HIS ARM, THE BULLET MISSED HIS HEART. ISN'T THAT GREAT?
KATHY?
LET'S GRAB SOME LUNCH, OKAY?


BOY! AND I THOUGHT SOCIAL WORK WAS BORING. THIS IS PRETTY NEAT!
STINKY'S
OPEN LUNCH
YEAH!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE?


IT'S LIKE STANDING IN A RIVER UP TO YOUR KNEES, AND ALL AROUND YOU PEOPLE ARE BEING SWEPT AWAY. AND IT'S ALL YOU CAN DO TO SAVE ONE OR TWO.
AND EVEN THOSE YOU DO HELP GET SWEPT AWAY BECAUSE ALL YOU'RE DOING IS BUILDING ON MUD!

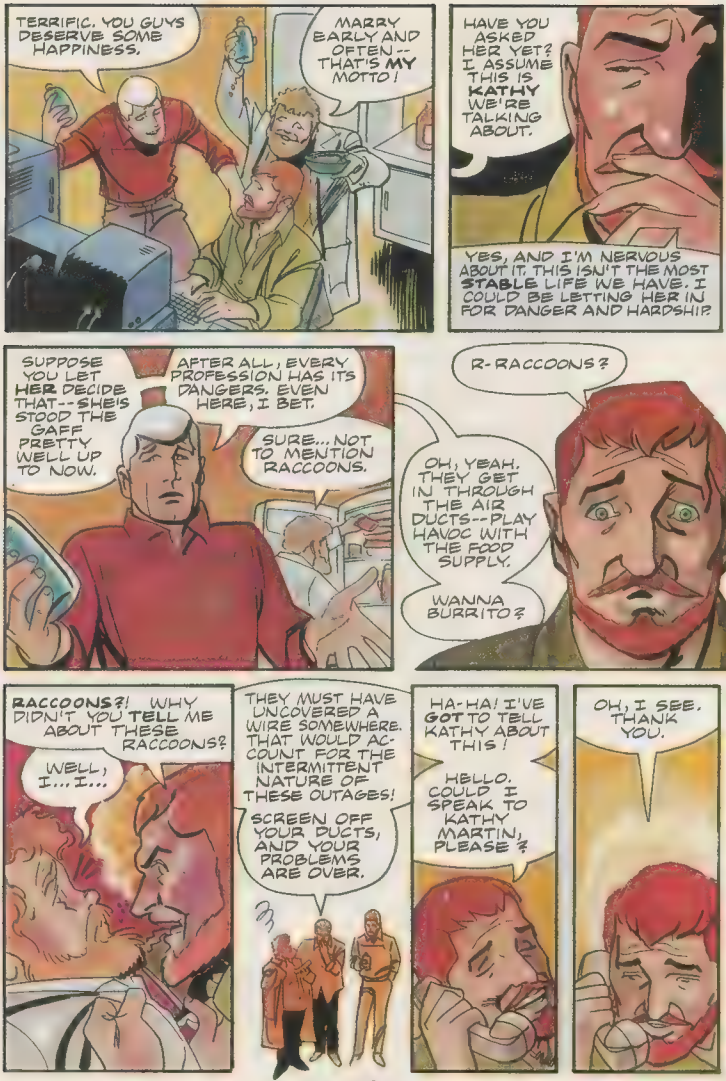

DAY'S
FECIAL

THERE WAS THIS OLD GUY ON THE STREET. USED TO CARRY ALL HIS MONEY AROUND IN A SHOPPING BAG.
SAID HE HAD TO... OTHERWISE PEOPLE WOULD STEAL IT. CLEARLY DELUSIVE BEHAVIOR, RIGHT?
UH, RIGHT.

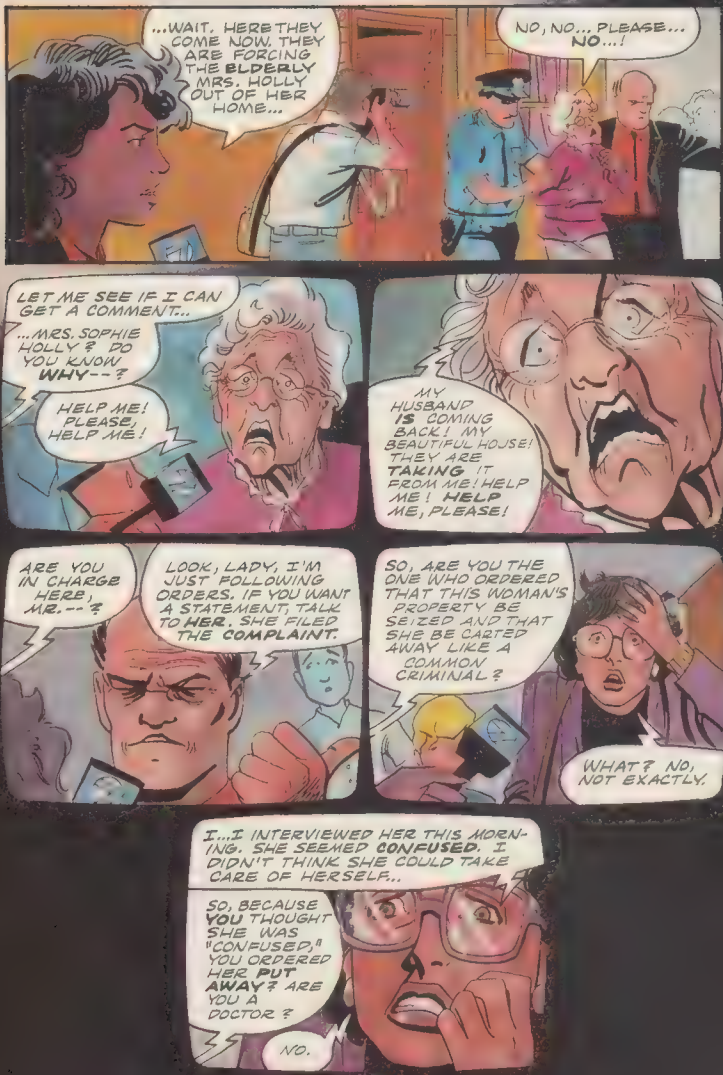

SO WE GOT HIM INTO A TREATMENT CENTER, WHERE HE WAS SAFE. OF COURSE, THEY HAD TO CHARGE HIM FOR THE TREATMENT.
AND WHEN THE MONEY WAS GONE, THEY RELEASED HIM. HE WAS CURED. OF COURSE, HE HAD NO MORE MONEY TO BE DELUSIVE ABOUT.
'S FUNNY, IF YOU LOOK AT IT RIGHT.

HA-HA.

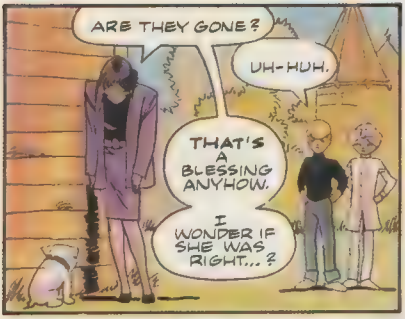
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!
WALDROOD CORPORATION
AND THEN THESE INTELLIGENT APES CAME OUT OF THE TREES AND SAVED US! HA-HA-HA!
HAH-HA! TOO COOL! GROOVY!
YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT HALF OF THIS, DOC?
NO, THANKS.
HERE'S THE VOLTAMMETER YOU WANTED, DOC.
WHAT'S THE USE?! THERE'S NO SCIENTIFIC REASON FOR THIS SYSTEM TO BE MALFUNCTIONING!
EATING ALWAYS HELPS ME THINK. I WONDER IF THERE'S ANY SODA LEFT...?
KATHY LOOKED PRETTY GRIM WHEN SHE LEFT TODAY. YOU GUYS HAVE A FIGHT?
SORT OF.
ACTUALLY, I'M THINKING OF GETTING MARRIED.

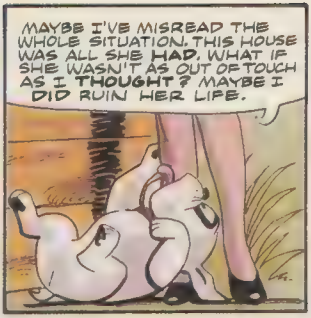

TERRIFIC. YOU GUYS DESERVE SOME HAPPINESS.
MARRY EARLY AND OFTEN -- THAT'S MY MOTTO!
HAVE YOU ASKED HER YET? I ASSUME THIS IS KATHY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.
YES, AND I'M NERVOUS ABOUT IT. THIS ISN'T THE MOST STABLE LIFE WE HAVE. I COULD BE LETTING HER IN FOR DANGER AND HARDSHIP
SUPPOSE YOU LET HER DECIDE THAT -- SHE'S STOOD THE GAFF PRETTY WELL UP TO NOW.
AFTER ALL, EVERY PROFESSION HAS ITS DANGERS. EVEN HERE, I BET.
SURE... NOT TO MENTION RACCOONS.
R-RACCOONS?
OH, YEAH. THEY GET IN THROUGH THE AIR DUCTS -- PLAY HAVOC WITH THE FOOD SUPPLY.
WANNA BURRITO?
RACCOONS?! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT THESE RACCOONS?
WELL, I... I...
THEY MUST HAVE UNCOVERED WIRE SOMEWHERE. THAT WOULD ACCOUNT FOR THE INTERMITTENT NATURE OF THESE OUTAGES!
SCREEN OFF YOUR DUCTS, AND YOUR PROBLEMS ARE OVER.
HA-HA! I'VE GOT TO TELL KATHY ABOUT THIS!
HELLO. COULD I SPEAK TO KATHY MARTIN, PLEASE?
OH, I SEE. THANK YOU.

THEY SAY SHE'S AT THE HOSPITAL... SOMETHING ABOUT A GUNSHOT WOUND.
MEANWHILE...
THAT'S RIGHT. WE JUST LEFT THE HOSPITAL. WHAT ABOUT THAT CARPENTRY JOB? YOU DID? THAT'S GREAT.
AND MRS. HOLLY? SOMEONE IS SEEING HER? THAT'S--
WHAT? THEY'RE DOING WHAT? RIGHT NOW?
THANKS FOR KEEPING ME UP TO DATE!
...AND IT IS ON THIS QUIET, NEIGHBORHOOD STREET THAT, TODAY, TRAGEDY STRUCK. MRS. SOPHIE HOLLY...
...A LONG-TIME RESIDENT, IS BEING EVICTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES. THE OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INSIDE FOR ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES, BUT...

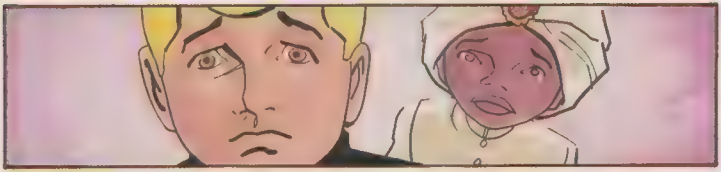

...WAIT. HERE THEY COME NOW. THEY ARE FORCING THE ELDERLY MRS. HOLLY OUT OF HER HOME...
NO, NO... PLEASE... NO...!
LET ME SEE IF I CAN GET A COMMENT...
...MRS. SOPHIE HOLLY? DO YOU KNOW WHY--?
HELP ME! PLEASE, HELP ME!
MY HUSBAND IS COMING BACK! MY BEAUTIFUL HOUSE! THEY ARE TAKING IT FROM ME! HELP ME! HELP ME, PLEASE!
ARE YOU IN CHARGE HERE, MR.--?
LOOK, LADY, I'M JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS. IF YOU WANT A STATEMENT, TALK TO HER. SHE FILED THE COMPLAINT.
SO, ARE YOU THE ONE WHO ORDERED THAT THIS WOMAN'S PROPERTY BE SEIZED AND THAT SHE BE CARTED AWAY LIKE A COMMON CRIMINAL?
WHAT? NO, NOT EXACTLY.
I...I INTERVIEWED HER THIS MORNING. SHE SEEMED CONFUSED. I DIDN'T THINK SHE COULD TAKE CARE OF HERSELF...
SO, BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT SHE WAS "CONFUSED," YOU ORDERED HER PUT AWAY? ARE YOU A DOCTOR?
NO.

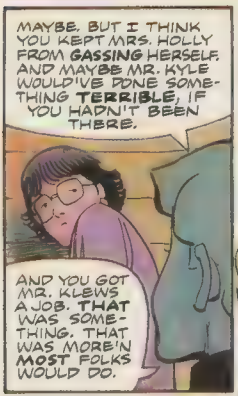
I JUST THOUGHT SHE COULD HURT HERSELF. SHE LEFT HER GAS ON.
SO FOR ONE SMALL MEMORY LAPSE, YOU THINK SHE SHOULD LOSE EVERYTHING?
YES. NO. I'VE GOT TO TALK TO HER. PLEASE LET ME BY! SORRY...
IS THERE SOME REASON YOU'RE AFRAID TO ANSWER THESE--?
MRS. HOLLY, I...
YOU TRICKED ME! I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY FRIEND!
YOU NEVER LIKED ME! YOU JUST WANTED MY HOUSE! NOW FRANK WILL NEVER KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME! YOU'VE RUINED MY LIFE!
SO, IN ANOTHER CASE OF SOCIAL SERVICES MISCONDUCT, A SINGLE VINDICTIVE CASE-WORKER DESTROYS AN OLD WOMAN'S DREAMS. WE'LL BE WATCHING THIS STORY.
BACK TO YOU, DAN.

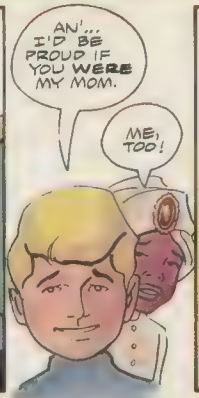

ARE THEY GONE?
UH-HUH.
THAT'S A BLESSING ANYHOW.
I WONDER IF SHE WAS RIGHT...?

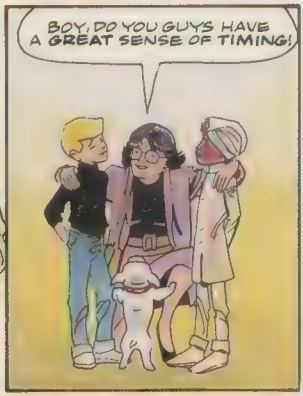

MAYBE I'VE MISREAD THE WHOLE SITUATION. THIS HOUSE WAS ALL SHE **HAD**, WHAT IF SHE WASN'T AS OUT OF TOUCH AS I **THOUGHT**? MAYBE I **DID** RUIN HER LIFE.

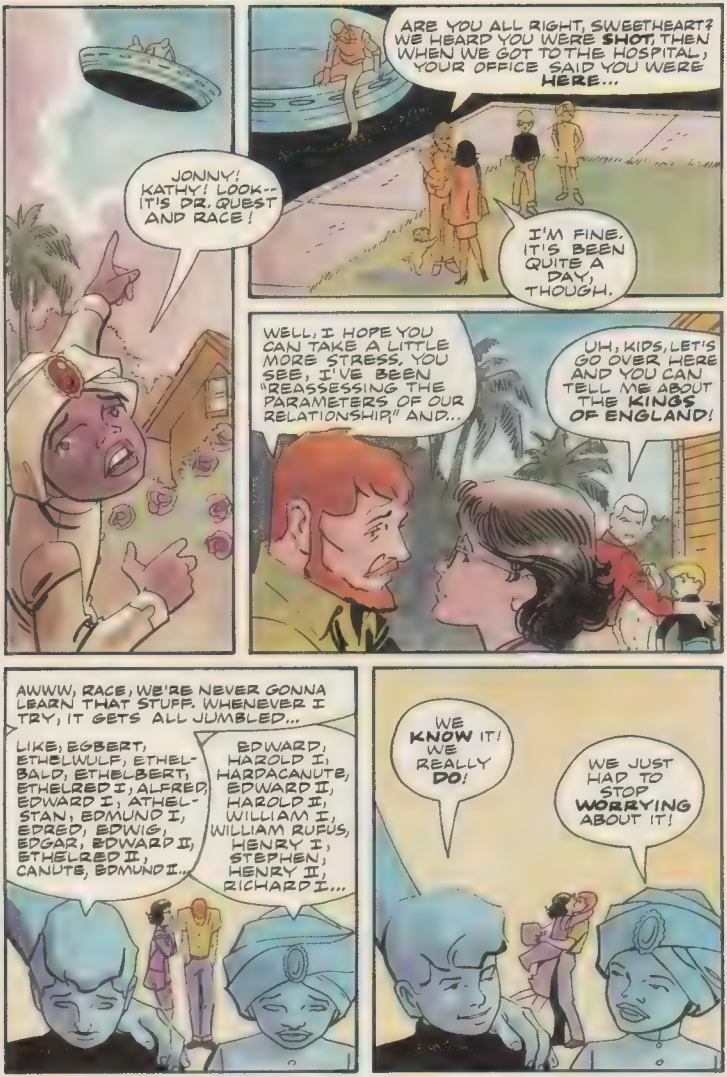
I GOT INTO THIS RACKET TO **HELP** PEOPLE, AND ALL I'VE DONE ALL DAY IS MAKE THINGS **WORSE**.
I GUESS I'M NOT EXACTLY THE WORLD-BEATER YOUR **MOM** WAS, HUH, JONNY?




MAYBE. BUT I THINK YOU KEPT MRS. HOLLY FROM **GASSING** HERSELF. AND MAYBE MR. KYLE WOULD'VE DONE SOMETHING **TERRIBLE**, IF YOU HADN'T BEEN THERE.
AND YOU GOT MR. KLEWS A JOB. **THAT** WAS SOMETHING. THAT WAS MORE'N **MOST** FOLKS WOULD DO.


AN'... I'D BE PROUD IF YOU **WERE** MY MOM.
ME, TOO!


BOY, DO YOU GUYS HAVE A **GREAT** SENSE OF TIMING!


JONNY! KATHY! LOOK-- IT'S DR. QUEST AND RACE!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SWEETHEART? WE HEARD YOU WERE SHOT, THEN WHEN WE GOT TO THE HOSPITAL, YOUR OFFICE SAID YOU WERE HERE...
I'M FINE. IT'S BEEN QUITE A DAY, THOUGH.
WELL, I HOPE YOU CAN TAKE A LITTLE MORE STRESS, YOU SEE, I'VE BEEN "REASSESSING THE PARAMETERS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP," AND...
UH, KIDS, LET'S GO OVER HERE AND YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT THE KINGS OF ENGLAND!
AWWW, RACE, WE'RE NEVER GONNA LEARN THAT STUFF. WHENEVER I TRY, IT GETS ALL JUMBLED...
LIKE; EGBERT, ETHELWULF, ETHELBALD, ETHELBERT, ETHELRED I, ALFRED, EDWARD I, ATHELSTAN, EDMUND I, EDRED, EDWIG, EDGAR, EDWARD II, ETHELRED II, CANUTE, EDMUND II...
EDWARD, HAROLD I, HARDACANUTE, EDWARD II, HAROLD II, WILLIAM I, WILLIAM RUFUS, HENRY I, STEPHEN, HENRY II, RICHARD I...
WE KNOW IT! WE REALLY DO!
WE JUST HAD TO STOP WORRYING ABOUT IT!

NOW, THIS IS WHAT I CALL A REALLY HAPPY ENDING!
RARK RARK
Brought to you by:
WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS
STORY
MARC HEMPEL
PENCILS/LETTERS
MARK WHEATLEY
KATHRYN MAYER
LETTERS/COLORS
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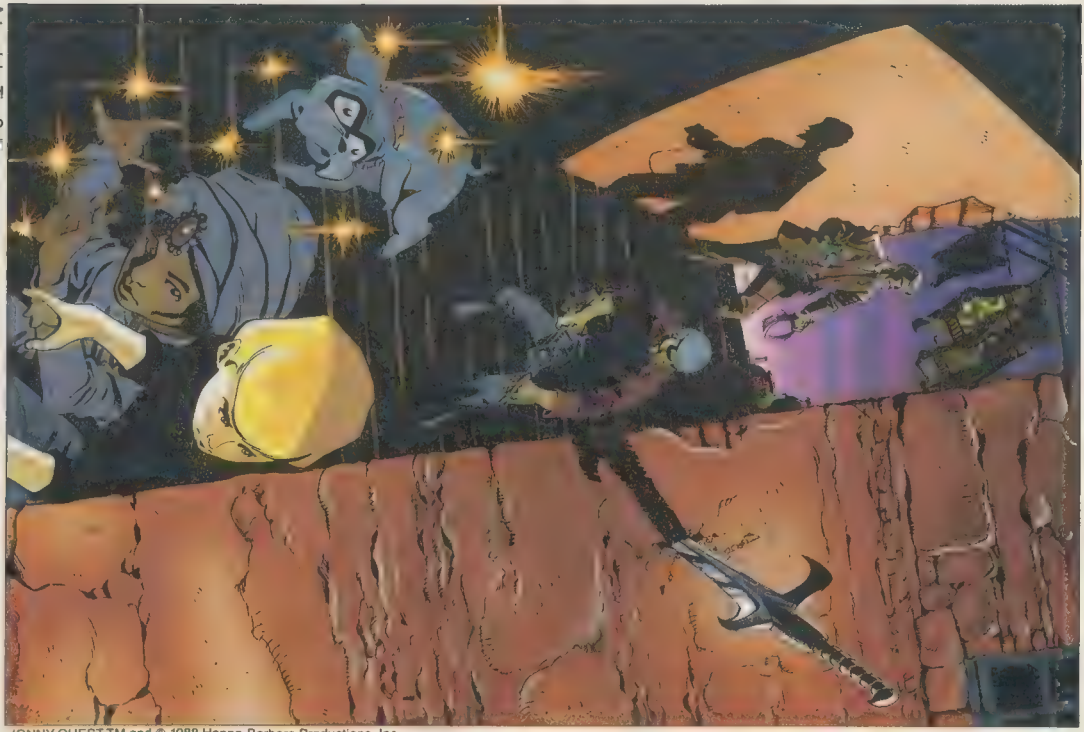

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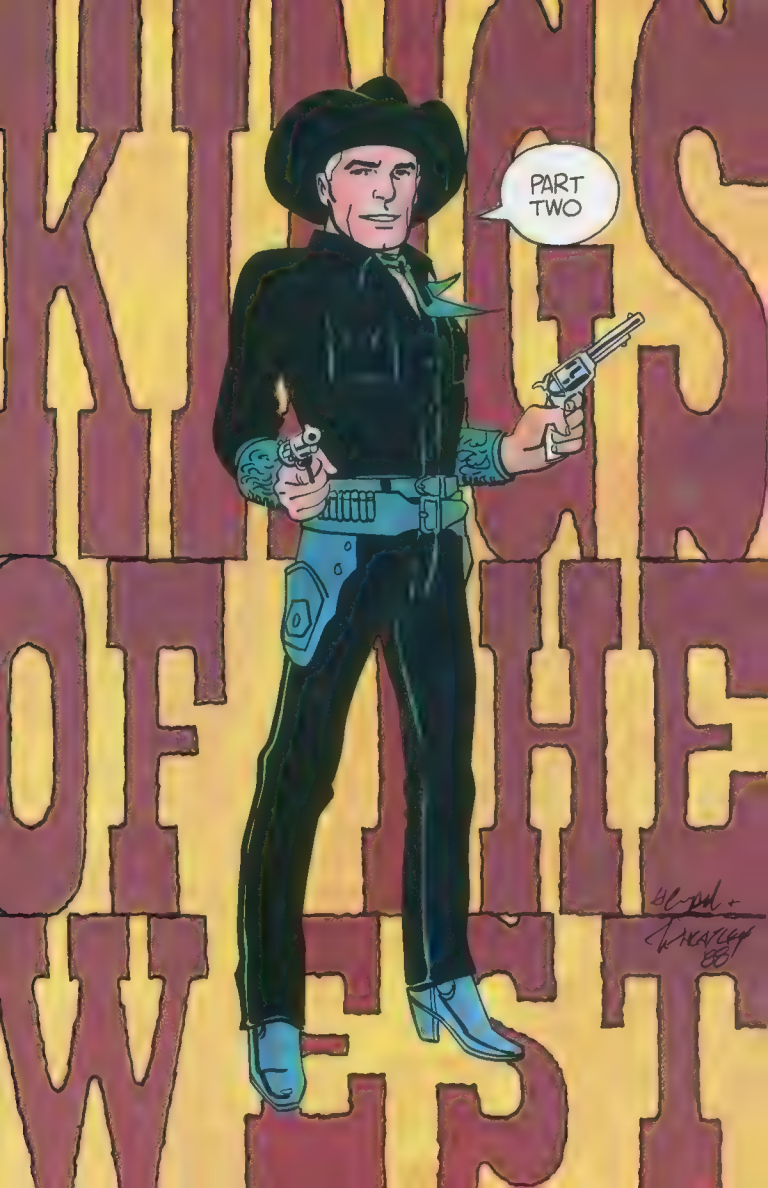
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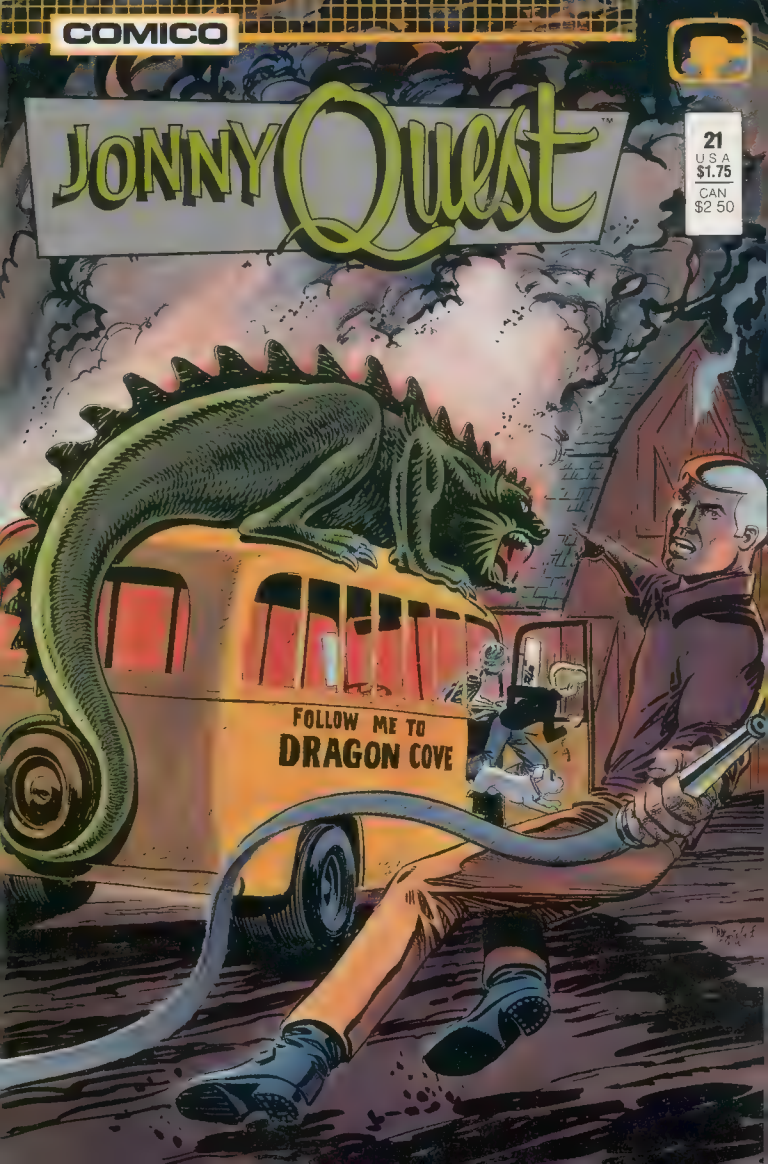
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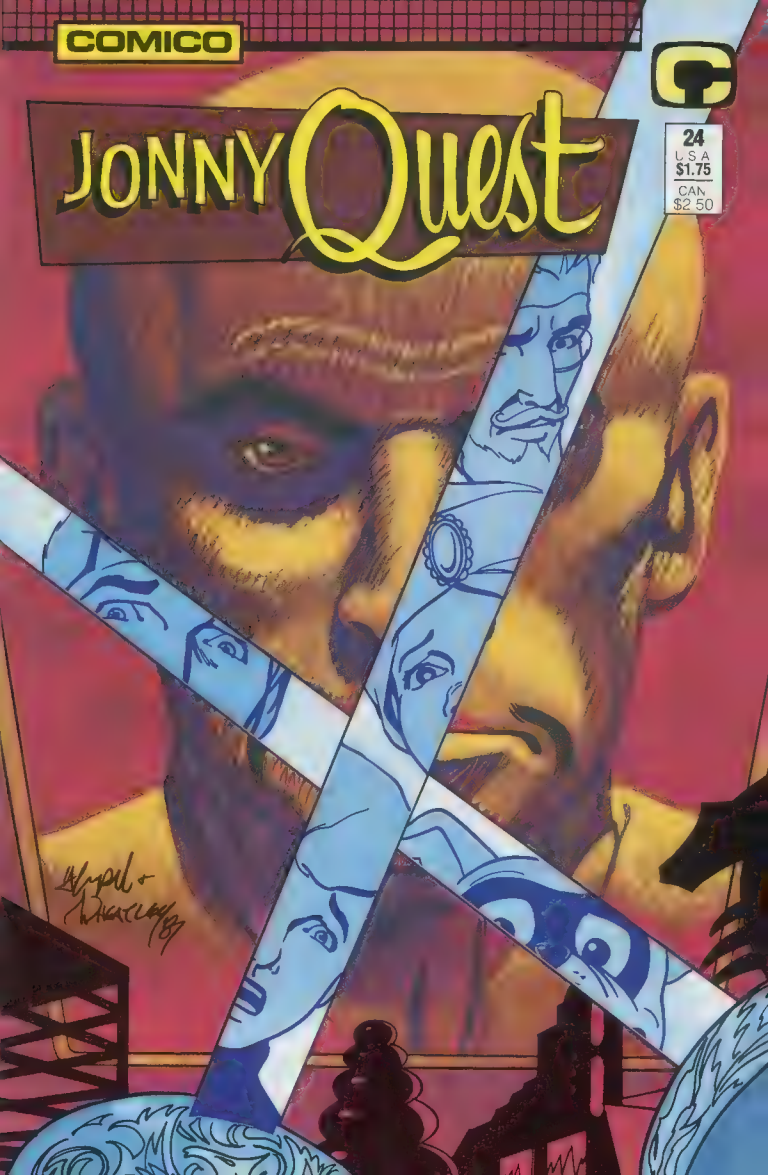
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Dad and Mom,

SCIENTIST DEFEATS INVISIBLE MONSTER

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by Dr. Benton Quest and hi

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Hosted by
DR. BENTON QUEST

Award presenters:
Marc Hempel
and
Mark Wheatley

Benton Quest poses with the living Triceratops he discovered
while working on th
arley Frost's new movi

QUEST TO LECTURE ON UNIVERSAL ENTROPY

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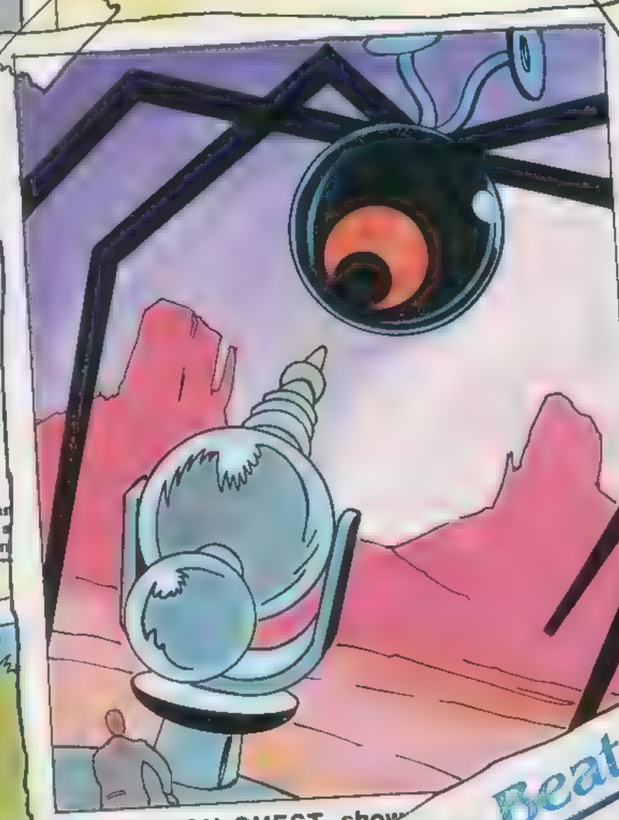

DR. BENTON QUEST, show
device he used to defea

Science Beat

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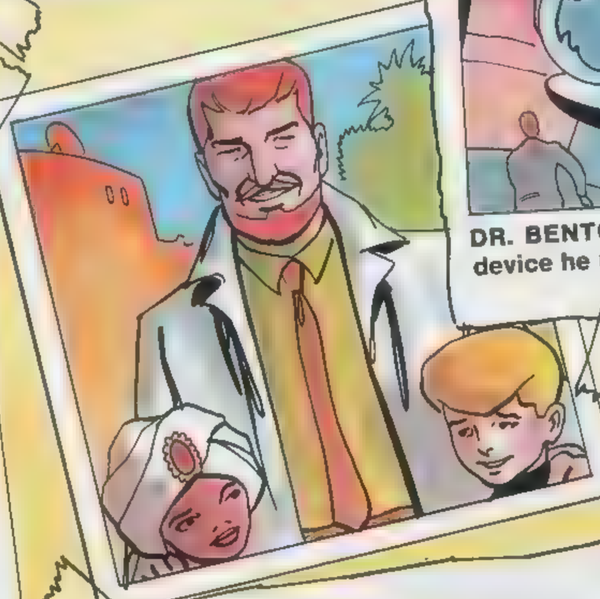

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